

KATAHDIN CAMPS



C.A. STEPHENS

O. P. Sent to R. R. L. 10/11/36

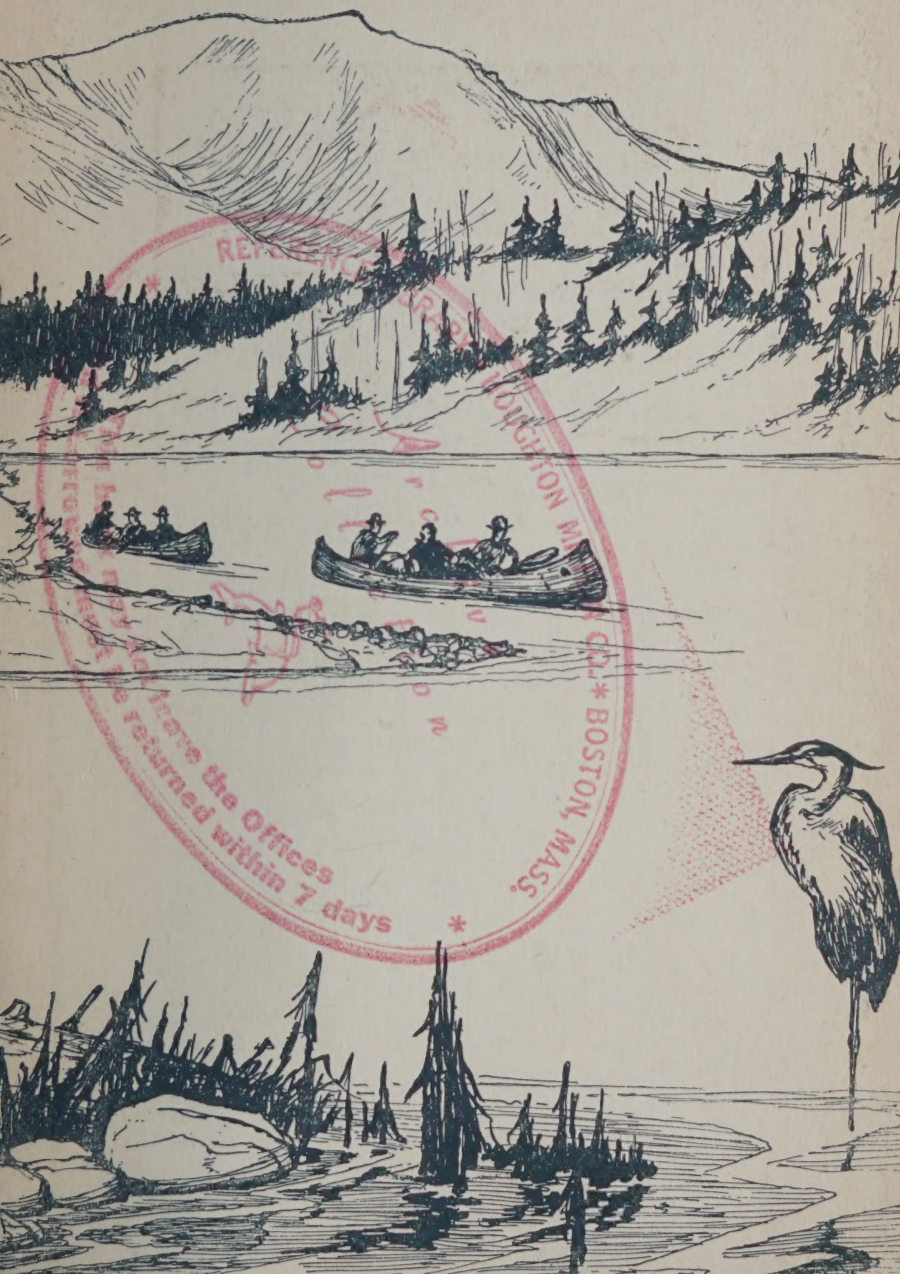
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1927



KATAHDIN CAMPS



IN SPITE OF THE PUNISHMENT THE EAGLE WAS DEALING
OUT TO HIM, CRAWLED UP WHERE THE NEST
LAY (page 191)

KATAHDIN CAMPS

BY
C. A. STEPHENS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JACOB BATES ABBOTT



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TO
THE BOYS AND GIRLS
OF SUMMER CAMPS
BETTER REGULATED AND
LESS PERILOUS THAN
MINE!



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Drawn by Jacob Bates Abbott



KATAHDIN CAMPS

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CHAPTER I

WHEN MY GOOD ANGEL SLEPT

IF the beautiful old legend is true, we are to believe that every one born to this earthly life has a guardian angel appointed in advance whose mission it is to pilot him through the dangers that beset his path. It is a consoling thought. But mine must have been asleep, or off on its summer vacation, when in an unguarded moment I rashly agreed to take ten city boys on a camping trip to Mount Katahdin in the Maine woods!

Any grown man ought to have known better, and I think I did, but it occurred while I was being entertained at dinner in the home of two of the boys who grew vociferously interested in

stories I told them of the joys and adventures of camping in the wilderness. Their fond parents were looking on, the dinner, too, was excellent, the boys begged to go — and, well, I promised!

My first pledge had been to four boys only; the sons of my hostess and two boys visiting at the house that night. But immediately these four told all their young friends where they were going, and two others begged into the party; later came a third and then a fourth, the latter a little brown Japanese lad, in America at that time to be educated — and finally two more. So that, altogether, ten boys appeared at the rendezvous in Bangor from which point we were to make our start by rail to Mattawamkeag and thence by stage to Medway at the confluence of the West and East Branches of the Penobscot River where the canoe voyage began.

And still we were under our full strength, for, as we journeyed on by stage from Mattawamkeag — horses were still used there — my attention was attracted to something suspicious that seemed to be going on between my ten boys inside and certain passengers on top of the swaying coach — namely, suppressed snickers within and chirruping sounds without, accompanied by efforts to peek forth from windows.

‘Who are they up there?’ I asked at length. ‘Do you know them?’

At first none of the ten confessed to a know-

ledge of those aloft, but Pinkham Stearns, one of the later recruits, laughed guiltily and I questioned him further.

‘Indeed, sir, I did not tell them to come,’ he replied. ‘I said I didn’t believe you would have them, but they wanted to come.’

I got out and called a parley. There were two boys on top. ‘Who are you?’ I demanded. ‘And what do you mean by joining us in this way without giving me your names?’

They were boys of good appearance, well-dressed and evidently well-bred — the older one apparently fifteen or sixteen years old, the other much younger. That they would try to force themselves, uninvited, into my party seemed improbable.

The older boy gave a gulp of embarrassment, then faced the situation. His name was Malcolm Knox, he said, and the younger boy was his brother Jimmy. Their home was in Boston.

‘I know that I ought to have spoken to you about coming,’ Malcolm acknowledged, ‘but I didn’t get a chance; there wasn’t time to write.’

‘But your people,’ I inquired, ‘your parents — do they know of it?’

‘Mother isn’t at home,’ Malcolm confessed. ‘She is at Narragansett Pier, and my father is in New York. But they both said we might go somewhere in the country this vacation. My Aunt Emily, who is at our house, said that if you

were taking a party of boys camping she wished we could go, too.'

'But did this aunt of yours know when you started?'

'No, sir. But we left word, so she needn't worry.'

'Neither your father nor your mother knows?'

'No, sir.'

'And how about the money for your railway and stage tickets?'

'Oh, we had that saved up all right, sir!'

I was far from satisfied, and had no mind to lead runaways into the wilderness. Indeed, my sense of dreadful responsibility had been increasing with every mile of the journey. In my pocket I had seven or eight letters from the parents of some of my charges — letters which had been sent me at Bangor, and which I had as yet found no time to consider thoroughly. But hasty glances at them had increased my feeling of uneasiness. On the way up to Mattawamkeag another missive in a dainty white envelope had been slipped into my hand by Herbert Fitzgerald.

'Mother wanted me to give it to you, sir,' he whispered. 'She's afraid I shall get up in my sleep. But I shan't,' he added, with scorn, 'and don't you bother, sir!'

And now here were these runaway Knox boys! The younger was a somewhat frail lad, but his

frank brown eyes searched my face honestly; and partly from shame that he had misbehaved, partly from dread of being rejected by me, two unshed tears gathered in his eyes.

‘I must think this over,’ I temporized. ‘Meanwhile, you are coming to Medway with us anyway.’

At Medway the two guides that I had bespoken were to join us; and here I established the whole party overnight at the one little tavern. The boys fairly stormed the place. Never before had I seen such an effervescence of high spirits! At sight of Mount Katahdin looming to northward, several of them literally turned handsprings and shouted. The people at the tavern looked on in great astonishment, and the dimensions of my undertaking revealed themselves to me hour by hour.

From Medway I sent the following telegram to the father of the Knox boys, directed to his hotel in New York City:

Your sons have joined my party here. What are your wishes? Please wire reply.

I also sent a message to their mother at Narragansett Pier:

Your sons are with me here. They are safe and well. Do you wish them to go on with us?

In addition to my other troubles, my arrangements for journeying farther went out of gear.

Both guides were awaiting us at Medway, but when the one on whom I mainly relied saw my party, he was dismayed.

'Excuse *me!*' he exclaimed. 'I quit! I had no idea, sir, you was fetching such a big crew of boys! I wouldn't go out with them for ten dollars a day! There ought to be a guide for every one of 'em! I know what green city boys are when you take 'em off in the woods. They know just nothing! If I was in your place, sir, I wouldn't take 'em, I really wouldn't!'

The other guide was an elderly, rather stupid backwoodsman, named Green. He was willing to go, but stood about grinning helplessly at the boys who immediately 'sized him up.' Within an hour they were addressing him with familiar disrespect as 'Daddy Green.'

At this season the best guides were already engaged, and it was only after many inquiries and a good deal of walking about the place, that I succeeded in hiring a young woodsman of nineteen years, whose name was Shadwell, and a Penobscot Indian known as Louis.

It was near eleven o'clock that night before I had arranged matters for the start next day, and got the boys housed and quiet. Then in the privacy of my own room, I read the letters from fond mothers and trusting fathers.

First came the touching epistle from Mrs. Edith Fitzgerald whom I had known well when

she was a girl. It was the one Herbert had brought to me from his mother — five closely written pages, explaining how delicate her son had been up to his eighth year and informing me about his somnambulism, and when and from what dietetic causes he was likely to walk in his sleep. She anxiously appealed to my watchfulness:

‘Do pray bear it in mind, will you not?’ the letter concluded. ‘At home I always lock his room door at night, but in a tent that cannot be done, of course, for there is no door. I feel we ought not to have let him go! But he was so set on it! I suppose the camp may often be near river-banks or rocks, or ravines! If he got up I am afraid he would fall in and be drowned and perhaps nobody near him! Couldn’t you, after you had all lain down, put a little string from his wrist to yours? The others perhaps needn’t know, if you thought they would laugh too much at Herbert — he is such a proud, sensitive fellow! It could be tied after the lights were out and be very small and inconspicuous. I have made one. Herbert has it in an envelope. He will give it to you. It is small, but it is of white silk and *very strong*. And it has two little snaps, one at each end, so you will not have the trouble of tying it in the dark.’

There was more in the same appealing vein. Laughable, was it? That depends on the point of view. Certainly I was far from being amused.

The other letters which had followed me to Bangor were not unlike Mrs. Fitzgerald's. Seven were from mothers, for in anxieties of this kind fathers are seldom so prolific. Each mother wished me to be a little more careful of her boy than of anything else, because to her fond heart, there seemed to be especial need of it.

'I want to beg as a particular favor that you will look out that my Frank doesn't sit or sleep in a draft anywhere,' young Mrs. Merritt wrote. 'He had croup dreadfully when he was little. He hasn't had it now for two years, and we are hoping he is outgrowing it; but if he should get wet or sleep in a draft, it might come on, and oh, what would you do, away off in the woods and no doctor! Could you get his feet into hot water and wrap a warm blanket round him? And if you have mustard, please put some in the water.' Six little dose packages of quinine accompanied this letter.

Another of the solicitous mothers, Mrs. Lindenheim, had an anxiety lest her son Brooks should wet his feet and put on damp stockings in the morning; and she begged me to be sure and have a fire every night and see to it that the boys, especially Brooks, warmed their feet and dried their stockings. Mrs. Lindenheim also sent a small box containing scores of little sugar-coated pills, to be used in case Brooks wet his feet and took cold.

Mrs. Porter Canfield was more anxious, with good reason, about guns, and cautioned me in a majestic manner: 'When I reflect,' she wrote, 'on your design to have accompany you in the forest such a number of youths, and when I further reflect on the nature of firearms, and consider how excited are the young at beholding the wild inhabitants of the woodlands, I ponder, Mr. Stephens, on the question, what will you do to prevent accidents? My father, Colonel Canfield, who is addicted to the chase in its varied forms, is of the opinion that you would do well to exclude loaded guns from your camp, or rather insist that the cartridges be removed from the weapons. Furthermore, he observes that no more than two ought to proceed in hunting together, and that you would do well to impress upon all the unwisdom of shooting before they see plainly what they are firing at. I have exacted from my two boys, Porter, Jr., and Ernest, positive promises in this matter, and I do hope, Mr. Stephens, that you will require the others to observe the necessary precautions.'

Mrs. Shelley Ames's greatest fear was lest the canoes might upset. She had lost a brother, by drowning, in the Adirondack region a year previously, and felt that canoes were very hazardous craft. She pleaded with me to make sure that good order was preserved on the water, and to see to it that the boys sat low in the canoes.

‘If my son Gordon does not observe this rule, I give you full permission to punish him,’ wrote this Spartan mother. ‘For Gordon is really a very nervous boy, and he may often try to change from sitting low to sitting high, if you do not keep him in wholesome fear of punishment.’

Mrs. Peck Disston was more particularly concerned as to what her son should eat. ‘Roscoe has such a delicate stomach that I have always been obliged to exercise the greatest care about his food,’ she explained. ‘If he takes meat more than once a day, or indulges in sweets, he is certain to have a bad time that lasts for a day or two. It is asking a great deal, I know, but *could* you keep an eye to what Roscoe is eating?’

And this when a boy is camping out and ravenous as a young wolf!

Mrs. Eva Kendrick Bowen, whom I had known somewhat during our school days, entrusted her Charles, now fourteen, to Providence and me, with hopefulness, yet warned me that he sometimes suffered from dreadfully swollen tonsils and cramped legs after being in the least chilled. Would I ‘look to just that one little thing and win the undying gratitude of an old acquaintance?’

I had previously had no idea how many things ailed boys! There wasn’t a sound one in my party, if their mothers’ statements were not exaggerated.

Mrs. Henry Fairbanks’s letter was, unlike the

others, a merry, not a serious message. 'I wouldn't be in your shoes for a thousand dollars!' she challenged. 'That's what has come to you from writing boys' stories! Why, my Arthur has been crazy to go with you! We really couldn't stop him. What a time of it you are going to have!'

'You can't help laughing at my Arthur's voice,' she added. 'I laugh myself to hear him talk. He is fourteen now, and they say his voice is changing. I do hope he will not misbehave or be too much trouble to you. It is the kindest thing I ever heard of, I'm sure, your taking all those boys off with you just to please them. Their food, too! I wonder if you realize what all those hungry boys will want to eat! By the way, who is paying for all that food? Like you, not to say anything about that! But I will gladly pay for what Arthur eats and I advise you to get it from the rest of them. I do hope and pray that nothing will happen to any of them.'

Little Giartsu Oteri, the Japanese boy, was the only one of my original party concerning whom I had received no parental admonitions, but that made me feel especially responsible for him. Somewhere, away off in the Land of Cherry Blossoms, where the Sacred Volcano rears its white peak, I could imagine a little brown-faced woman, in a tea-chest gown and holding a fan, putting up a prayer to her gods in behalf of her small Giartsu.

Mr. Gardner Adams cautioned me chiefly against camping in damp, low places where the boys might be exposed to malaria. His wife was solicitous in a postscript to the letter, lest the boys, including her son Schermerhorn, should go bathing in rivers or lakes while overheated. And yet some doctors say that boys should be warm from exercise when they begin to strip for swimming.

Morris Chapman was the only lad of the party whose mother was not living, and when I had read all the fond messages of the other boys' mothers, he seemed doubly an orphan, although his father had sent me a note concerning care in the use of firearms by the boys.

That night at Medway I penned little reassuring notes of reply to all those mothers, promising to inform them as quickly as possible if anything went wrong. Then I went to Herbert Fitzgerald's door and asked him about the wrist string. Charley Bowen, who shared the room with him, was asleep, and so indeed was Herbert, but I thought it best to wake him and have that string off our minds, as it were.

'Herbert!' I whispered, when his eyes had opened and he had realized where he was. 'Did your mother send me another envelope besides the one you gave me?'

Even by the dim lamplight I saw his cheeks flush a little and his sleepy eyes darken.

‘Yes,’ he admitted, ‘but — but — I have lost it!’ I laughed encouragingly, for I sympathized with him.

‘Lost it?’ I asked. ‘Where can it be found?’

‘I dropped it overboard, sir, from the steamer on my way down to Bangor.’

It was plain that he had not done this accidentally, but a boy has his pride and his dread of ridicule as well as a man, and I knew that I should probably have done the same thing at his age.

‘I’m rather sorry,’ I told him. ‘Sometimes it is a little hard to do all that our mothers require of us. But nobody will ever love us half as much as our mothers.’

‘But I *couldn’t* have them all see that string, sir!’ Herbert objected. ‘I dropped it overboard on purpose.’

‘Well, never mind, my boy,’ I reassured him, after a moment’s consideration of the case. ‘I understand how it was. I will take the key and lock the door of your room on the outside, to-night; afterward when we are in the tent you can sleep next to me and we will manage somehow. The others need know nothing about it. Good-night now, Herbert’; and after locking the door carefully, I returned to my own room but had scarcely done so when the tavern-keeper put his head in at the door.

‘There’s another boy downstairs — just come,’ he informed me with a chuckle.

‘Another!’ I exclaimed. ‘How did he get here?’

‘More’n I know. I was ’most asleep. When I looked up he was sittin’ in the bar-room. Rained down, I guess’ (for it was raining a little). ‘He looks pooty wet and muddy. Shall I put him up for the night?’

‘Yes,’ I replied, but hurried down to investigate. A rather good-looking boy — fourteen years old for a guess — was seated by the stove with a look of evident perturbation on his tired face.

‘Is there any one here you wish to see?’ I asked.

Plainly he had thought over what he meant to say to me. ‘I heard that you were taking a party of boys on a camping trip,’ he began hesitatingly. ‘So I came on in hopes to go with you. I didn’t come from Boston on the steamer with the others,’ he explained; ‘I came through by train to Bangor. You had gone when I got in, so I took the next train, a freight, up to Mattawamkeag and, as the stage had left hours before, I followed on foot!’

‘And you walked all the way?’ I exclaimed.

‘Yes, sir,’ he replied; then added that it was a pretty long tramp. ‘And I do hope you will let me go with you,’ he urged rather pathetically. ‘My name is Montrose Whitten.’

‘But how about your folks at home?’ I objected. ‘Did they know about this?’

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‘Father and Mother are in California this summer,’ he told me. ‘I’m living with my uncle at Brighton so as to attend the High School in Boston. The boys there had heard of your party, and Uncle Randall said I might go if you would take me. I do wish you would let me go!’ he pleaded again.

‘I don’t know,’ I answered, rather shortly, I am afraid. ‘I must think this over. Have you money for your journey back to Boston?’

‘Oh, yes!’ he assured me. ‘I shouldn’t have come if I hadn’t’; and in proof of this he drew forth what appeared to be a well-filled pocket-book from inside his waistcoat. ‘I wish, sir, you would take care of this for me till morning,’ he added in a lowered voice. ‘While I sat here alone some tough-looking fellows came in and stared hard at me. I’m afraid of being robbed!’ I told him the frequenters of the place were probably not so ‘tough’ as they looked; but as he seemed really alarmed, I took charge of his pocket-book for the time being. His confidence in me was rather touching. I concluded he was telling the truth; and uneasy as I felt about the size of my party, I hadn’t the heart to send him back — he looked so tired and anxious. ‘But at this rate there will be twenty of them by the time we get up to Katahdin,’ I reflected. ‘Boston will be depopulated of boys!’

I had the tavern-keeper get the newcomer

something to eat, then dry his clothes after he had put him to bed.

What Mrs. Fairbanks had written made me anxious about food supplies. At Bangor I had laid in what I supposed sufficient for a party of ten for three weeks, but now I began to realize that this would not be enough for my present party. This was a vital matter. After going to my room, I returned downstairs to make inquiries of the taverner. He informed me that there was a grocery near by where probably I could purchase bacon and 'hard tack,' also pork, beans, canned beef, sugar, etc. 'But you will need somebody to cook for you,' he offered. 'Old Green couldn't cook for all those boys, nor young Shadwell. I wouldn't trust that Ingin to cook either.'

'Who could I hire?' I asked him. 'Is there any one who would go from here with us?'

The publican appeared doubtful. 'Most of the regular guides are off with parties now,' he explained. 'I don't know of but one and he is getting old. I'll go and see him in the morning,' he added helpfully. 'You are in for a hard time of it anyhow. You'll sartin sure need a man to cook for ye. Them three guides you've got ain't worth their salt!'

For several wild moments I had thoughts of taking the whole party back to Bangor in the morning — yet I could never face all those bit-



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terly disappointed boys and do it. Only one way now and that was to go on and trust to Providence. At last, but not till past two o'clock, the sullen roar of the West Branch rapids lulled me to sleep, but scarcely to refreshing rest.



## CHAPTER II

### OFF FOR KATAHDIN

AFTER two or three hours of sleep, disturbed by dreams of plaintive mothers reproaching me on account of boys who had suffered every conceivable harm from food and gunpowder, I waked and sat bolt upright in bed. The sun was shining brightly and a persistent sort of knocking was being carried on by Charley and Herbert, who were trying to get out of their room. Before I could dress they climbed forth on the piazza roof and got down to the ground by way of the posts. Most of the boys were already at the ferry, where four large canvas canoes in which we were to ascend to the West Branch were lying ready for the ferry-boat. Because of low, rough water I had arranged to have the canoes, outfit, and supplies carted up to Fowler's Carry. From that point we could cross the North Twin Lake, and afterward ascend the Branch to the foot of Mount Katahdin.

While we were at breakfast a messenger came to me with a telegram from Mrs. Knox, the mother of Malcolm and Jimmy. She said that her boys could go with me if I was willing to have them; otherwise they must return to Boston immediately. At nine o'clock that morning no

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reply had come from Mr. Knox, and I afterward ascertained that he was absent from New York City, and did not receive my telegram until two days later. Thus I was compelled to decide whether I should keep the two boys, or almost break their hearts by sending them back to Boston. It resulted in my accepting them as members of the party.

But an increased supply of food had first to be obtained, and I took my way to the small general store of the place. There I was able to purchase three sides of bacon, two hams, half a bushel of beans, fifty pounds of pork, a dozen cases of smoked beef, thirty pounds of sugar, two dozen cans of condensed milk, the same quantity of marmalade, twenty pounds of coffee and other necessities of camp life, all of which was sacked or boxed and taken down to the ferry.

Remembering, too, that the nights are nearly always chilly at Katahdin, I laid in a pack of seven extra blankets, the thickest they had at the store. The boys had worn strong, warm suits, but I feared they might lie cold in the tents at night.

Hastening back to the tavern, I found a small weazened old man with a wen beside his nose, whom the tavern-keeper introduced as Matthew Bugbee, adding that he had expressed his willingness to go with us as cook provided that he should not be asked to do anything else besides the cook-

ing, and that some one else was to cut and fetch the firewood. The innkeeper told me aside that Uncle Matt, as he called him, was a guide of considerable experience, but had been unable to get engagements of late on account of his wen which people did not like the looks of. It certainly was quite a wen, rather larger than his nose, in fact; but I was not in a position to look askance at a wen of any size and hired him at once, wen and all.

Bugbee had a full kit of tinware, frying-pans, kettle, coffee-pot, bean-pot, etc., also a canoe in which he stipulated his kit and the food supplies should be transported; and here I wish to say of him in advance that a more efficient, faithful helper could hardly have been secured. He knew his job and was always on it.

All this had delayed us in making a start. The boys were dashing about, wild with impatience. As yet I had found no time to introduce the newcomer, but I found that he already knew several of the party and had made himself acquainted generally. I gave up all thoughts of sending him back.

Altogether it was eight o'clock before we had breakfast, and nine before we were at the ferry ready to embark.

Then another interruption occurred! As the boat was casting off, loud shouts were heard and a man was seen racing down the river-bank, fol-

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lowed at break-neck pace by a slim, half-grown lad with a small satchel in one hand and a gun and a rod in the other. 'Hold on! Wait! Wait!' the man was vociferating. 'Here's a boy that wants to go with you!'

\* 'My name's Galbraith,' the man panted, coming to a halt on the landing-stage. 'This is the son of my brother, Captain Lucas Galbraith, of the Regular Army, who is stationed near Phoenix, Arizona. My nephew's name is also Lucas' — the lad approached, equally out of breath but trying to smile ingratiatingly. 'He came to my place in Bangor from Boston, yesterday noon,' the elder Galbraith explained. 'His mother is not living; but he has brought a letter from his father giving him permission to join your party if you will have him. I hitched up and drove fast after you. He's got money to pay his way, fifty dollars, and if it costs more I will see to that myself. He wants awfully to go. I hope you will let him.'

'Another boy! Ye gods! Will the line stretch out till the crack o' doom?' I thought.

The boy, unusually handsome and evidently well-bred, approached and offered his hand. 'I'm sorry I'm so late,' he offered politely. 'If you will take me, sir, I will try to make just as little trouble as I can.' His manner was straightforward, his eyes unflinchingly honest, his tones clear but quiet. I liked his appearance but oh,



another boy to look after! I wanted to shout no, but that lad's eyes had entreaty in them. I bent a glance on my expectant young party and the four helpers. Every face wore a smile of acquiescence. I weakened.

'Well, jump aboard,' I bade him. 'Good-day, Mr. Galbraith. I will bring your nephew back to you at Bangor when we return — if I can. But the risks must be yours and Captain Galbraith's.'

'And now, ferryman, push off!' I cried. 'Push off as quick as you can, before any more get here!'

The previous evening four teams had been engaged to come up from Medway and meet us after crossing the ferry; we then set off by a rough trail through the woods along the north bank of the West Branch. There was room on the carts for the boys to ride, but I thought it as well for them to reduce their exuberant vitality by walking for a couple of hours. Their shouting, when so much as a squirrel or a partridge started up by the way, was well-nigh deafening, but I had the guns safely stowed away on one of the carts.

During this walk they got together on a footing of closer acquaintance; but the process of getting acquainted is, with boys, commonly accompanied by more or less disturbance. Within an hour an altercation had occurred between Arthur Fairbanks and the elder Knox boy, which resulted in the Knox boy receiving the nickname of 'Hard Knocks.' Thereafter, too, his younger

and gentler brother was distinguished from him as 'Baby Knox' — for some of the boys had not forgotten the tears seen in his eyes the day before while I was questioning him. These nicknames indicated simply that my boys were much like other youths.

After four hours of rough carting we launched the canoes and embarked on the river at the upper end of Fowler's Carry. Each of the three guides took four boys with him in a canoe, while I had the remaining five with me.

I made the boys kneel in the bottom of the canoe to do their paddling, for the kneeling posture not only keeps the weight low, but gives the best control of paddles and canoes. Although this attitude makes the knees sore and places a strain on the thighs at first, it becomes, after a few days' practice, the easiest of positions for paddling. Even on that first day the boys kept up and the crews vied in spurts and races. Bugbee followed in his own canoe, well-loaded with supplies.

The day proved cloudy and by three o'clock rain began to fall; but I judged it necessary to reach a lumbermen's camp, near the foot of Ambejijis Lake. We therefore plied our paddles till six o'clock and were wet and tired when we reached shelter. A brisk fire in the old camp stove and a good supper cheered the boys, and by the time they were warm and dry they were

so sleepy that quiet soon settled down for the night.

Next morning was overcast and lowering. Three 'carries' had to be made during the forenoon, but the boys worked well and we reached Debsconeag Lake at four o'clock that afternoon.

Thus far no large game had been seen, but, as I felt sure that there would be deer in the bog at the end of the lake, I bade the guides skirt it with the canoes, telling the boys, however, nothing of what I was looking for. Very soon I caught sight of seven deer in the reeds and brushwood alongshore.

'Boys,' I said, 'there is a herd of deer.'

'What?' 'Where?' 'What, deer?' they cried.

'Right ahead, by the shore.'

The deer were in plain sight, three does and four fawns, standing still in the dry brushwood. It was odd, but those boys could not see them, although staring with all their eyes! Even after I had directed them three times, only one espied the deer.

'Oooh-h-h!' he exclaimed. 'Those red things? I didn't think deer were so red! And o-o-oh, look at the little ones — fawns — all spotted!'

All except Porter Canfield now saw them, and one prolonged 'Oooh-h-h!' burst forth; but Porter could not get his eyes on them at all, and the deer moved away into the bog.

Then the hunter passion, the desire to kill

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game, flamed up in Malcolm Knox, Charley Bowen, Ernest Canfield, and several others.

‘Where are our guns? Can’t we shoot just one?’ they begged, and I had to repeat what they had been told time and again already, that it was now ‘close time,’ and that killing deer or moose was contrary to the game laws.

‘Oh, bother! Why did we come before October!’ lamented Malcolm. “‘School’!” “‘School’!” Oh, dear! a boy never can do anything because of “school”! What’s the use of having a gun?’

We paddled up the lake to where the West Branch enters it. On one side of the inlet here is a long, low point of land, covered with a thick growth of water maples; on the other, or east side, the ground is open and dry, affording one of the best camp-sites in the Maine woods, with sparse forests and a fine view down the lake.

Here we landed, and here the boys had their first real experience with setting up the tent, gathering wood for the camp-fire and boughs for their bunks. Daddy Green and ‘Shaddy’ were kept busy answering questions about woodcraft, but the Indian, Louis, had vanished and I was afraid he had deserted, since one of the canoes was gone. About an hour later, as Cook Bugbee was putting flour cakes to bake in a big pan before the fire, I heard the distant report of a gun and soon afterward saw the Indian coming back



over the lake to camp. He had a yearling buck in the canoe.

'Louis,' I demanded, 'what does this mean?'

He explained very gravely: 'I see deer what you call *hung*. He leg in 'tween tree log. Twist him round and round! Deer stay there, die. Better shoot him, I say. So shoot him. Deer die anyhow.'

I looked at Louis, but if he had lied, as is probable, his conscience did not disturb his countenance. With persistent gravity he proceeded to cut a gambrel stick. Then he solemnly hung up and dressed off the deer, with every boy looking on in eager anticipation of venison. Little Jimmy Knox was so revolted by the butchering, however, that afterward he could not be induced for a long time to taste the meat.

The liver and heart of a young deer are choice bits, and within an hour Bugbee (or 'Buggy,' as the boys had nicknamed him) had fried not only these parts, but several panfuls of the loin. Plenty of potatoes and hot cakes were cooked. Shaddy set up a long table of poles, laid the tin plates, and such consumption of food followed as I do not wish to describe. It was quite useless to advise caution to boys who were hungry as young bears.

I counseled moderation and they promised to be moderate, but it soon appeared that their definition of the word was not mine. Panful

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after panful of the savory young venison disappeared. I thought Mother Nature could be trusted to stop them in good time, but she didn't hurry about it. Once they had tasted that succulent meat they seemed unable to get enough. Little Jimmy was the only boy who did not eat till he could eat no more. Night fell before the repast ended, and then the boys were too weary and too satiated to do more than lie about the fire and make plans for the next day.

I had provided a wall tent large enough to shelter ten or more, for the trip as originally planned; but when I found my party increased to seventeen, I hired another tent at Medway. Into this I put the Knox boys, Charley Bowen, Pinkham Stearns, and four others. The larger tent was pitched but a few yards away, and in it I bestowed the rest of the party, including Herbert Fitzgerald, whom I placed next myself.

After the boys had retired, I sat up a little longer to make a penciled list or roster of the party by name, with memoranda of what I had been charged to bear in mind about each one. It ran as follows:

Herbert Fitzgerald. (Addicted to somnambulism.)

Pinkham Stearns. (Subject to earache.)

Frank Merritt. (Liable to have croup.)

Brooks Lindenheim. (Apt to be ill of cold if he wets his feet.)

Porter, Jr., and Ernest Canfield. (Mother much concerned about guns.)

Gordon Ames. (Mother terrified about canoes.)

Roscoe Disston. (Has delicate stomach. Can't eat sweets nor much meat.)

Charley Bowen. (Has swollen tonsils if he gets cold.)

Arthur Fairbanks. (Voice changing. Alternates between deep bass and squeaks.)

Giartsu Oteri. (Little Japanese boy. In America to be educated.)

Schermerhorn Adams. (Father afraid he will go in bathing when warm.)

Morris Chapman. (Father urges great care in the use of firearms.)

Malcolm Knox. ('Hard Knocks.')

Jimmy Knox. ('Baby Knox.')

G. Montrose Whitten. (Joined the party during the evening after it had arrived at Medway.)

Lucas Galbraith, Jr. (Son of Captain Lucas Galbraith, of the Regular Army, now stationed in Arizona. Overtook party after it had set off up the West Branch. Gentlemanly.)

Their ages ran from thirteen to sixteen or seventeen. Seventeen boys all told; twenty-two including guides, cook, and myself.

While I was attempting to recall what each

boy was subject to, I heard some one — Porter Canfield, I thought — in the next tent exercising his poetic powers and — worse still — his voice, composing a rhyme including the whole party. He had got as far as

‘Old Buggy with his wen  
Was the homeliest of men,’

when Hard Knocks cut in with ‘Shut that off! Stop it! You may have one sometime, yourself.’

‘That’s so,’ an unrecognized young voice chimed in. ‘Buggy’s all right. You let his wen alone.’

‘But it rhymes with *men*,’ insisted Porter.

‘I tell you, stop it!’ Hard Knocks repeated peremptorily. ‘Your old poetry is the worst ever, anyhow. You leave out Buggy’s wen!’

‘But what shall I say?’ remonstrated Porter. ‘I want to get him in.’ Silence followed for a short space, when another unrecognized, boyish voice suggested, ‘Well, you might say,

‘Old Buggy was our cook,  
And does it like a book,’

which was adopted by acclamation. I want to add that I never heard any of them mention Bugbee’s deformity again; they were indeed a very decent lot of boys, though some of them, particularly Malcolm, had high tempers.

By ten o’clock the boys appeared peacefully



asleep; the last whispers and yelps had ceased. As I myself was very tired, the load of responsibility slipped from my consciousness and I too slumbered. But not for long. Presently I dreamed that game wardens were pulling me out of the tent, and I wakened to find some one actually plucking at my hand.

‘Who is it?’ I demanded.

‘Charley — Charley Bowen. Something’s the matter with Hard Knocks.’

‘You mean Malcolm?’

‘Yes, sir. I think you had better see him, sir. He’s a sight! You don’t need to strike a match. I’ve got one of the lanterns lighted outside.’

I rose hastily and went with Charley to the other tent.

‘He’s been going it all over the place,’ explained Charley, ‘kicking fearfully. He’s so hot I couldn’t stand him near me.’

I took the lantern and looked in. Pinkham was sound asleep in one of the farther corners of the tent, rolled up in a ball, looking as if he had been kicked there. Jimmy was asleep in the opposite far corner, lying partly outside the canvas. Malcolm lay contorted in the middle space, but rose suddenly to a sitting posture as the light fell on his face. His nightshirt was open at the neck and his sleeves were up, and he was clawing and digging at his flesh, which was the color of a boiled lobster. On bringing the lantern nearer, I

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was startled to see that his skin was literally covered with some sort of angry red eruption.

‘What’s the matter, Malcolm?’ I asked. ‘Are you ill?’

‘I don’t know,’ he replied thickly, rolling his eyes up strangely under his brick-red brow.

I laid fingers on his hot wrist and felt his fast-pounding pulse, fearful that the case might be measles or scarlatina, or even smallpox — and what should I do with all those boys, were smallpox to break out among them, off in the woods? With this anxiety in my heart, there was no more sleep that night for me.

Malcolm had every appearance of being a very sick boy. He seemed to be falling into a lethargy — he was not properly awake, or sensible of where he was or what we were doing for him. He was feverishly hot, and his entire body was covered with an eruption like nettle-rash, which, when rubbed, rose up in white wheals resembling bee-stings. Still thinking of contagious diseases, I awoke little Jimmy Knox, Malcolm’s brother, and asked him if Malcolm had been lately with any boy or in any family afflicted with measles or scarlatina. Jimmy did not think so.

Meanwhile, most of the boys in the larger tent had been roused by the lantern light and the talking. Blinking, with wild looks, they came crowding about, asking what was the matter

with Hard Knocks, a thing I particularly wished to know.

The boy was in so comatose a condition that I was afraid he would not only lose consciousness but cease to respire, and so die. Rousing him vigorously, I began kneading his flesh over his entire body, and, as he was blazing hot, I had Charley Bowen bring cold water, with which I sponged him.

It was not till Malcolm's skin rose in white puffy wheals under the sponge that I felt a little easier. A measles eruption would hardly show such symptoms, I concluded, and began to think that the rash was the effort of Nature to overcome the effects of a surfeit of food.

'He ate all the deer meat Daddy Green would fry,' Charley Bowen confided to me, in a low voice.

'Did he eat much' of the liver?' I inquired.

'All he could get, and heart, too; and then about all of the last spiderful of venison steak.'

The diagnosis was now easier, and I knew how to proceed with the simple medicines I had fetched from Bangor. A dose of ipecac, reënforced by one of mustard and water, produced excellent results; castor oil and Epsom salts followed later. Before seven o'clock the next morning the rash and white wheals went down, the fever abated, the pulse became normal, and Malcolm fell asleep. He looked much shaken,

and I really believe he was at one time of the night in such danger that if he had not been taken vigorously in hand he might have died.

At breakfast I improved the occasion by giving the boys a stern lecture on the danger of gluttony in general, and of eating venison and deer liver in particular. Poor Malcolm was an admirable text, as he was too feeble to get up that morning. The rash had not wholly vanished from his skin; and it seemed best to remain where we were for a part of the day at least. Sleep would probably be the best medicine for him, and so I requested the other boys to make as little noise as possible about the camp.

But sixteen boys, just refreshed by breakfast, can't keep still without enthralling diversion, and, when they implored me to yield up their guns and let them go hunting in the woods to the west and north of the lake, I consented in part. Not daring to let them go out with firearms and in one company, I compromised by giving guns to Porter Canfield, Pinkham Stearns, and Charley Bowen and sending them out with Daddy Green. I gave the old man strict instructions to keep them in line and see to it that they did not shoot one another.

Hares, partridges, squirrels, hedgehogs, and bears were allowable game, I informed the boys. I knew very well that there was not one chance in a thousand that so noisy a party would see



anything of a bear, if they did start one. Deer were exempt by law in this season, and at any rate there was almost no prospect of the tumultuous boys getting sight of one, much less of wounding or killing one with shotguns.

There were groanings and repinings among the others when I let those three go forth, so I made up a canoe party, consisting of Ernest Canfield, Schermerhorn Adams, Herbert Fitzgerald, and the Indian guide, Louis. I allowed them one gun, and gave them permission to go hunting over on the west shore of the lake.

As doleful expostulations burst forth from the ten still undiverted ones, I made up a third party of Brooks Lindenheim, Jimmy Knox, the Japanese, and young Shadwell, the guide, to go fishing, up to the first rapids of the Branch above Debsconeag.

The others were still standing about, discontented and chapfallen, but too polite to complain openly of this seeming partiality.

‘Well, boys, this does seem a little hard, but for safety’s sake, I don’t like to give out more guns. And I can’t let you go out in a canoe without a man to navigate it. So just take a stroll off in the woods and see how many different kinds of trees and shrubs you can enumerate. I would go with you, but it would not do to leave poor Malcolm here alone, and I am pretty sure that you will find the woods interesting. You

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can dig spruce gum; you may see deer. You will find sport of some sort.'

Off they went, and found 'sport,' indeed — and that within ten minutes. I had barely sat down in the tent with Malcolm when I heard a roaring and crackling accompanied by far-borne shouts.

Running forth in haste, I caught sight of a pillar of fire and black smoke mounting high over the tree-tops, roaring like a volcano! I hurried toward the blaze, for setting forest fires is a serious matter in such a wilderness. Fortunately, it had rained of late and the woods were so damp that I wondered how they could have started such a conflagration.

When I came in sight of the boys, the nature of the bonfire was evident. They had found a large clump of hoary old white, or canoe, birches, some of the trees were two feet in diameter and a hundred feet tall. Up the trunks of these, from the ground to high among the upper branches, the loose bark hung in curling rolls, in such quantities that a single tree would, if stripped, have yielded enough to fill a cart.

It had come into Arthur Fairbanks's mind to touch off with a match the very combustible bark rolls at the butt of one of these old trees, and of course the fire ran up the trunk with great rapidity, causing a strong draft as it gained headway, and pouring off dense volumes of black

smoke. In a moment the tall tree was an astonishing, roaring column of flame, at which the boys shouted with delight — and immediately touched off another tree!

From birch trunks the fire ran to the tops of a group of pitchy firs, which in turn burned with a crackling that could have been heard a mile away.

This was all great fun for the boys, and, thanks to the wet condition of the underbrush, was not attended with any great danger of a forest fire; but I felt obliged to warn them, and read them the law which renders campers who carelessly set fires in forests liable to severe penalties. It began to appear all too possible that I, as the only member of the party who could be held responsible, might be involved in financial ruin through legal fines. Fortunately these boys were decent young Americans and my warning prevented their setting fire to more trees.

Presently there was a new diversion. Frank Merritt, who had gone on by himself, was heard shouting excitedly, and when the others hurried to him they found that he had discovered two fat porcupines high in the top of a poplar tree which was shadowed around by a number of dense spruces. I left them there bombarding the hedgehogs with clubs and old tree-knots and, judging from the shouting, they found diversion for two hours or more.

## CHAPTER III

### GREAT FISHING AT ABOL

WHEN I returned to camp, after having left the boys shouting at those imperturbable porcupines, Hard Knocks wakened and declared he felt hungry, which was the best evidence that his restoration to normal health would be rapid. I was bustling about to get him bread and butter and tea, when the fishing party with Shadwell, the guide, came back without any fish. When trout won't bite at the bait offered, boys seldom have patience to persist until they find something the fish seem to want.

Louis, the Indian, did not arrive with his canoe party until nearly eleven o'clock, and then to my great annoyance I found that he had killed another deer. Men of Indian blood are seldom respectful of game laws; they are apt to kill what they desire for food at any time. I could have forgiven the offense, in consideration of Louis's semi-savage breeding, but it vexed me to learn that he had tried to induce the boys to support him in a lie to the effect that they had shot a deer because it had been found with a broken leg and mired in a swamp.

This fiction he told me with the gravest of



faces, but the boys were too honorable to stand by him. Herbert at once assured me that the story was false. I took Louis so sharply to task for his second transgression that he scowled all the afternoon, and for two or three days did his work sullenly. Then, however, the clouds cleared away and he so totally forgot my scolding that I believe he would again have killed a deer out of season, without hesitation.

The shooting party with Daddy Green also returned before noon, rejoicing in a hare which Charley Bowen had shot.

Meanwhile Malcolm devoured his bread and butter and became so much better that after lunch I gave orders to break camp and move on up to Abol where the West Branch bends southward from the foot of Katahdin. There are three short carries en route, but the boys bore a hand enthusiastically and one trip over each carry sufficed to transport the luggage.

Below Pokwokamus are a number of beautiful little islands where at this season the shrubbery was laden dark red with very fine, large chokecherries. I cautioned Herbert, Charley Bowen, Malcolm, and Jimmy, who were in the canoe with me, against eating many of them and shouted back the same advice to the canoes behind. But boys are appetites incarnate, and Gordon Ames, who was with Daddy Green in the last canoe, seemed to have an especial fondness

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for choke-cherries. At any rate, I learned afterward that he had devoured a large quantity, pits and all.

We made such good time that at six o'clock in the afternoon we reached Abol, where Katahdin looms enormous above the pine forest and from its rocky ravines pours two cold-water creeks into the river — the Aboljacknegesic and the Aboljackamegus, known for brevity as the Abol brooks. I was sure that we should find a large school of speckled trout in the river a little below its junction with the cold waters of the brooks. I therefore bade the guides make our camp on the west bank of the river, in the magnificent white birch growth there, and told the boys to get out their fishing tackle and come 'trouting' with me. Many of them had brought fly-rods, casting-lines and flies, but some had only hooks and lines.

We crossed from the camping side of the river in canoes, and beached them at a sandy spot between the mouths of the two brooks. Rods were then rigged, and long alder poles cut and strung for those who had only hooks and lines. Even the little Japanese, Oteri, was provided with a pole, line, and hook, baited with salt pork. I asked them all to wait till the last boy was equipped, then led the way to a point of rocks a little below the mouth of the more southerly of the brooks. There, bidding them all take posi-

tion on the shore rocks at a safe distance apart, as I thought, and with as little noise as possible, I enjoined silence for one long minute by the watch, then cried, 'Cast!'

The hooks and lines were swung at once — *swish* — *wish* — *plash!* But those Abol trout were not of the timid variety. Within five seconds the Adams boy had hooked a beautiful, red-spotted two-pounder, which he slung clean over his head with a suppressed screech of triumph. That was the first fish he had ever caught. Some of the boys nearest him turned momentarily with envious looks, but most of them were intent on their own lines. Scarcely half a minute later Porter, Jr., had hooked a one-pounder, and Malcolm Knox, another.

The excitement now became intense. I never saw more innocent eagerness. Just then little Oteri hauled out a big one, but did not dare touch it as it leaped and thrashed on the stones.

'Sir! Master! Sir! Have they the mouth to bite?' he cried to me, nearly turning his own mouth wrong side out in his efforts to find English words for the question.

I assured him that trout cannot bite boys harmfully, and unhooked his fish. I dodged a number of swinging hooks, untangled two lines that had conflicted, then climbed a large boulder in the rear of the fishing party, and sat and laughed. It was one of the most amusing sights

I ever witnessed — but it was better to witness it at a safe distance!

Soon Roscoe Disston hooked a fish and, while attempting to play it, fouled the line of Arthur Fairbanks who stood near him. Then upstream raced the fish and took a turn round Pinkham Stearns's line.

'Quit that now!' cried Pinkham wrathfully. 'I had one just biting and you've scared it off!'

'What's your line 'way down here on my fishing ground for?' retorted Arthur. 'You haul out of this!'

'How can I haul out when your fish is round my line?' objected Pinkham indignantly.

'Shut up there, you fellows!' growled Herbert and Malcolm, whose riparian rights were next above and below. 'You are scaring all the fish!'

But the wrangle went on; the three lines were in a dreadful snarl, and all three boys growing angry and losing time. They were obliged to haul ashore, and then, scolding one another vigorously, they set about disentangling the wet lines. And Roscoe's fish, the cause of all this trouble, had escaped from his hook!

Farther up, Brooks Lindenheim had caught the biggest fish of all and was shouting with pride in spite of the many furious outcries of 'Keep still!' from boys who thus added much to the noise which they desired to abolish. Montrose Whitten suddenly hooked a fish, stopped shout-



ing, 'Keep still!' and roared, 'I've got him! I've got him!' while the cries to 'Keep still!' from the other boys redoubled. But those greedy fish appeared indifferent to noise. Little Oteri caught a second and then a third. The shore stones back of the boys were a-flop with trout.

Suddenly a loud cry, not of elation but of physical distress, rose near the lower end of the line of fishers, and I saw Porter Canfield capering wildly over the stones, with Malcolm Knox circling round him, shouting, 'Hold still! Hold still! Hold still, you beggar!' What I feared had happened! One boy had hooked another.

It is probably impossible to keep boys, intent on fishing, from swinging their hooks at random. Malcolm had swung his with vehemence and there were two large fly-hooks on one main line which forked six feet from the end. One of these hooks had whirled out sidewise and caught Porter by the calf of his left leg, then as he leaped away the barb had been buried still deeper. When I reached him, the hook was up to the shank in the fat, soft calf, and he was shrieking like a young crow. Malcolm, still holding the line, stood aghast.

After his first wild, terrified leap had buried the barb deeply, Porter had dropped his rod, and, seizing the shank of the hook, had attempted to pull it out. But the barb held fast in his flesh. Frightened anew because he failed to get free and

hurt by pulling the shank, he pranced and shrieked again. The wound was bleeding and his trousers leg was pinned to it by the hook.

At first I hardly knew how to manage him; he was so crazy with fear and pain, and so angrily eager to rush at Malcolm for 'satisfaction.' In the flurry of an attempt to hold Porter, Frank Merritt got pricked by another hook, but fortunately it failed to enter beyond the barb.

When we had secured Porter and forced him to sit down on a stone, I assured him, 'It's nothing; don't be foolish. Let me get it out.'

He stuck out his under lip, stared at me, and objected, 'I guess you'd think it was something if you had it, Mr. Stephens.'

'I dare say I should,' I agreed, 'and I certainly would let somebody rid me of it.'

That seemed to calm him and he permitted me to examine the wound. No wonder he quivered, for the whole crook of the large barbed hook was buried in his flesh, as I discovered when I had severed the line, pulled it through the cloth and rolled up the leg of the trousers. The best way of getting the hook out did not at first occur to me; I thought I must cut it out, so produced my penknife.

'Now, Porter, this will hurt a little,' I explained, 'but only for a moment or two. Don't be a baby now! Show that you have proper grit.'

‘All right,’ he assented, and made an effort to sit firmly on the stone and look unconcerned. But when I opened the small blade of my pocket-knife, he trembled like a leaf, and, at the first slight cut, jumped and howled. Yet I had hardly cut through the skin; and it seemed clear that I could not cut that hook out unless he were held fast by the guides.

Fortunately I then thought of the only sensible way of releasing the hook. A barbed fish-hook cannot be pulled back out of the wound; but the point can be turned toward the surface, pricked up through the skin, the shank broken off where the line is attached, then the point worked forward and upward till the whole hook is out. This process appeared to give Porter little pain; indeed, I had the hook out almost before the boy knew it.

After making the blood flow by squeezing the wounded part, I took the boy across to camp in a canoe, applied a disinfectant, adjusted a piece of adhesive plaster carefully to cover and close the wound, and then turned him loose again. By this time he was smiling and as brave as ever. But the accident had, so to speak, given the fisherman a taste of his own medicine.

‘Mr. Stephens,’ Porter questioned very seriously, as I was putting on the plaster, ‘do you suppose it hurts a fish every time one is caught, as much as that hurt me? Because if I thought it

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did,' he added, his eyes very wide and earnest, 'I wouldn't go fishing again as long as I live!'

By this time dusk had fallen, and partly from anxiety for Porter and partly because the trout had ceased to bite as darkness deepened, the boys crossed over to camp with the fish they had caught, truly a noble string, thirty-three of them, none under a pound in weight, and one weighing nearly three pounds — all handsome speckled trout. The guides immediately dressed and fried them for our supper; but even what was left of the string next morning, when Ernest Canfield photographed them, made a fine picture.

Trout, fresh from the river, nicely browned in corn-meal, as Buggy and Daddy Green knew how to cook them, were a novelty to the boys. Fully nineteen pounds of fish disappeared at that meal, for there were twenty-two of us, including three guides and the cook.

The sad experience with Hard Knocks had made me watchful of the youngsters' gastro-nomic performances, and I noted early in the meal that Gordon Ames was eating little and looking pale. Unobserved by the others, I presently inquired if he were unwell. The truth then came out that he had been suffering bad internal pains for two or more hours.

'I expect it was those cherries I ate,' he confessed to me. 'They tasted so good I ate a lot of them,' he added.

‘Did you swallow the cherry-stones?’ I asked.

‘I suppose I did, a good many of them,’ he assented.

This was the most alarming ailment thus far, for colic from cherry-stones is a dangerous malady, since the pits contain a certain small quantity of prussic acid. At once I gave him a copious drink of warm salt and water, but the pains grew worse and the poor fellow could take no interest in Buggy’s ‘bean-hole,’ where the old guide was planting a large potful of beans and pork to bake in the ground — an operation vastly entertaining to the other boys.

Gordon soon took refuge in the tent, where I found him a little later rolling over and doubling up under his blankets; his hands and feet were cold, his eyes looked glassy and sick. Fully aware now that a case of enteric inflammation, perhaps appendicitis, was rapidly developing, I set to work again, albeit somewhat wearily, and took strong measures to remove the cause of his distress. I knew exactly how the poor boy felt, having once suffered when a lad from a similar indiscretion.

Gordon endured five hours of agony before he obtained relief, and the watch again marked two in the morning before I dared leave my patient.

Gordon was worthy, however, of his good family name. Even during the worst of his pain, when he believed he was about to die, and I

almost feared he might do so, he bore himself with true heroism. His thought was constantly of the trouble he was giving, rather than of the consequences to himself. Once, after an awful spasm, he looked up at me, ashen pale, with great drops of perspiration on his cold forehead, and said: 'If I don't pull through this, tell my family just how it was. Nobody was in the least to blame but myself. Like a pig, I put down a quart of those choke-cherrries, and was too greedy to take out the stones. That's all there was to it.'

When at last he was a little better, and I had once more warmed his feet in hot water and wrapped him in a warm blanket, he would not close his eyes till I had promised to lie down and 'not bother' any more.

'I'm all right now, and you've been up with me nearly all night,' he whispered earnestly. 'If I live a hundred years, I'll never forget your kindness to me to-night!'

I had placed him in the smaller tent, forty or fifty feet away from the other one in which the boys were all sleeping, cheek by jowl; and after glancing in upon them to see that all was well, and counting them up, I fetched my own blankets and made ready to lodge beside Gordon. The guides were now asleep in their own tent, still farther away.

It was cloudy, or at least thick weather, foggy

and very dark. The rapids below purred hoarsely. Across the river an owl was hooting, and off in the woods, on the flank of Katahdin, a cow moose suddenly bawled, long, low, and plaintively. It would have been just the time to 'call' moose; but I was too much fatigued to care for sport of any kind. Setting the lantern, turned low, outside the tent, I buttoned up the flaps to keep out the fog, and, rolling up beside Gordon, fell asleep within two minutes. In truth I had hardly slept soundly for three hours in five nights.

My last conscious thought was a feeling that perhaps I was neglecting the sleep-walking boy, Herbert. Hitherto I had kept him next to me at night, and there was a secret understanding between us that he should reach out and take hold of my hand, or at least keep his hand touching mine throughout the night. But now it had grown so late I let him lie where he was with the others.

I do not think I had been asleep two hours, however, when a slight noise about the canoes down the bank waked me with a sudden start. As my drowsy eyes opened, I heard the sound again — a slight thump and a scraping noise.

'Some animal that has smelled the fish that lay in the canoes,' was my first thought, and I drowsed again. But another bump of a canoe against the stones roused me once more. I heard, too, a slight splash of water. Starting up, half-

dead with sleep, I threw open the tent flap and stepped outside.

The fog was now so dense that the dim lantern flame seemed surrounded by a snowy halo. As I emerged from the tent, I heard the canoe bump again, and a sound as of a paddle pushing the gravel. Could any one be stealing a canoe at that time of night?

‘Hello out there!’ I hailed. ‘What are you doing with that canoe?’

There was no reply. Another apprehension then entered my mind. Seizing the lantern, I ran to the other tent and, pulling aside the flap, looked in on the boys. There was a vacant place, there were only eight of them! Herbert was gone!

CHAPTER IV

A FIGHT IN CAMP

SCARCELY believing that one of the boys could have vanished, I counted them again. Yes, Herbert was missing. The sounds which had awakened me left little doubt that he was up and out in a canoe. In his dreams he was probably fishing for trout.

‘Sleeping we image what awake we wish;
Dogs dream of bones and fishermen of fish.’

I groped my way down to the river-bank where the canoes were moored; the fog was so dense that I could see barely two yards by the light of the lantern which made only a white misty blur in the darkness. I fumbled along the log by the water’s edge where the canoes were pulled up; there were but three left.

I listened intently. An odd, low irregular plashing out in the fog, as of a paddle being dipped uncertainly in the water, told me where Herbert was.

If I shouted, the boy might awake and in his bewilderment fall overboard. He might swim ashore, for the water was deep and sluggish here at the bend, but there were rapids a little way below and the canoe might be drawn into

them even if the lad should escape. It would be best to make a still hunt for Herbert, I concluded, and that as quickly as possible. Setting the lantern in the bow, I jumped into a canoe and paddled toward the sounds.

Once clear of the bank, I sent the canoe swiftly forward. Since the stream was not more than fifty yards wide, I ran into shallows on the farther side, but without coming on the missing canoe. I listened again and, after a moment or two, heard something bumping on the stones a little below, and went in that direction, but in vain.

By this time I was quite confused and did not know north from south, but when I stopped paddling I discovered that the canoe was getting into running water, and the brawling of the rapids now sounded near. Those rapids were not very dangerous, however, and hearing the canoe bump again close ahead, I let mine drift and soon ran into the one I was seeking. Herbert had grounded on a gravel bar just below the place where he had fished the previous evening.

I let my canoe swing round, side on to the other, then held the lantern above my head and peered into the runaway craft. There was my young sleep-walker, sitting on the bottom of the canoe, in his pajamas, bareheaded, with his eyes open, but evidently asleep.

He was a picture of complacency, and he shook

the paddle feebly out over the gunwale as if it were a fishing-rod, muttering, 'Oh, that's a big one! That's a beauty! See him rise! See him rise!' His tousled hair glistened with fog drops, his eyes were wide open, and his fair young face was seraphic with the happiness of successful fishing. It seemed too bad to wake him up into the damp, dark, real world.

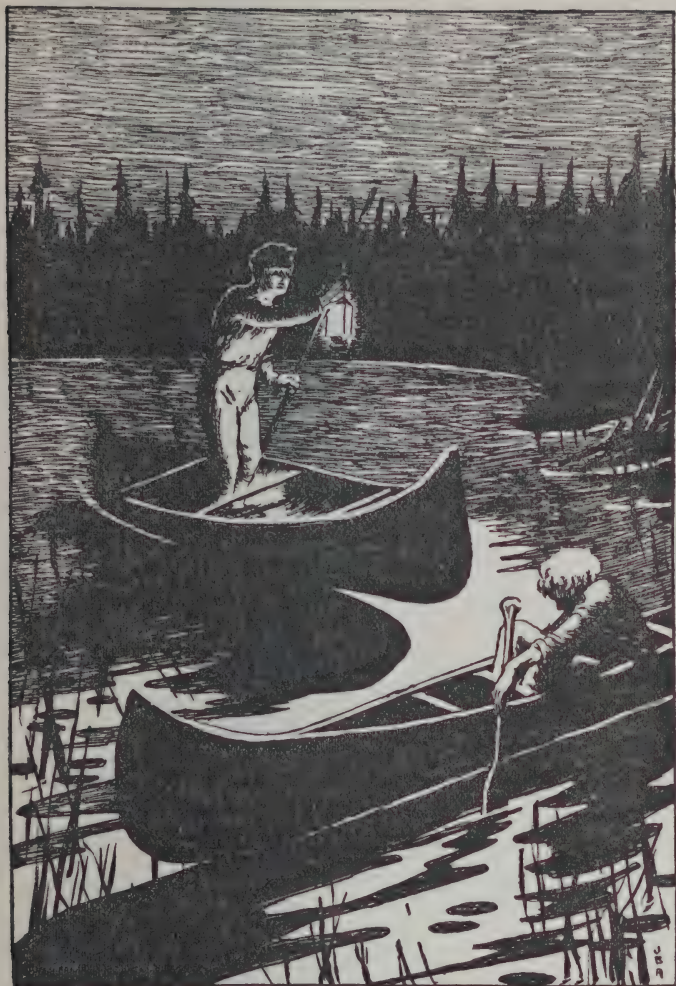
Lest he should topple over and get wetter, I put one arm carefully round him, and said slowly, 'Are they biting well, Herbert?'

He made no reply; his head drooped comfortably against my shoulder and he lay there as sound asleep as ever he had been in the tent. I had to shake him two or three times before he awoke. Then he gave a vigorous jump and, after a blink or two, cried out, 'What's the matter? What has happened?'

'Nothing,' I replied, laughing. 'Only you came out fishing in your sleep and I followed to find you. We are in canoes on the river. Sit quite still and I will take your canoe in tow, for we must go back to bed now.'

He was much mortified. 'What an idiot I am!' he exclaimed. 'What do you suppose makes me do it?'

'That's a difficult question,' I observed; 'never mind about it now. Here's a paddle. You had better use it to get warm, for you are very wet.' And so we went paddling at random in the



HERBERT HAD GROUNDED ON A GRAVEL BAR

fog for ten minutes or more, before we found the landing-place. I put Herbert between Gordon and myself in the smaller tent, and soon we were asleep again, Herbert holding fast to my thumb.

It was raining steadily when day dawned raw and cold, with the wind northeast and all the omens pointing to a long storm — always a hard trial for a camping-out party. Setting the guides at work, I made everything as snug as possible. We built a high fire-shed of poles and bark, in front of the tent, and the camp-fire burning there radiated warmth in to us. With several waterproof blankets we rigged up an awning over the table, so that all might sit down comfortably to meals, with little exposure to the driving rain.

The woods and shrubbery were so wet that to go hunting, or to ascend Katahdin, was out of the question, but the boys found diversion in watching Buggy open the bean-hole and haul forth the big pot of savory baked beans and pork, for which they had grand appetites. Some more of the trout were fried and altogether we had a substantial breakfast. I hoped it would help the boys to bear with patience the tiresome confinement of stormy weather.

But no sooner was breakfast ended than Roscoe and Malcolm wished to don their waterproof coats and boots, and go over to the fishing place again. We had fifteen pounds of fish still on

hand, so I dissuaded them, thinking it wrong to deplete that noble school of trout wantonly.

‘Now, boys,’ I admonished, ‘life isn’t all fair weather and fun. Rainy days will come now and then. We must be patient and wait for the storm to pass. You have a good cozy place in the tent, and the fire keeps us pretty warm. Just sit about comfortably and plan what you will do when the sun shines again.’

Gordon Ames was still out in the smaller tent, and not yet astir; I now went to see how he was faring. Although better, he felt somewhat languid and a little homesick, which is not to be wondered at, as he had been a very sick boy for several hours. I lay down beside him and began to relate one of the old legends about Mount Katahdin, with the result that we both fell asleep, and there I lay for two hours.

A most unwise nap! He who leads seventeen boys off in the wilderness ought never to sleep. Loud yells awakened me, just as Gordon scrambled up from under the blankets.

‘Well!’ he cried, ‘what’s up?’ If the camp had been attacked by wild beasts, the uproar could not have been greater.

Out I dashed into the rain, followed by Gordon, quite unmindful of his health. I saw the top of the ‘fly’ over the larger tent beyond the fire-shed, rocking to and fro, and the three guides running thither from their tent. What was going on?

Even on reaching the spot, I was for a moment at a loss to understand.

My first thought was that the boys were trying to kill some wild animal that had entered the tent. Malcolm, Roscoe, and Frank Merritt were down, and the others appeared to be jumping and tumbling over them, and making a tremendous uproar.

Next I perceived the very gentlemanly Schermerhorn Adams leap to his feet and deliver two vigorous kicks at the legs of the older Knox boy. It was simply a fight — and a vulgar, rough-and-tumble free fight at that!

‘Well, now!’ exclaimed the scandalized Gordon close behind me, ‘if that isn’t nasty!’

There could be no mistake about it; at least four of the boys were at it, tooth and nail; and when I pulled Charley Bowen away, he had, I regret to say, a quantity of Roscoe’s hair between his fingers.

I called out imperatively and the boys desisted. They looked not only ashamed, but surprised, themselves, at what had happened. Hard Knocks, who seemed to be under all the rest and was the worst ruffled one, clinched Porter, on regaining his feet, but let go when I spoke to him.

It was, I judged, one of those outbreaks of which it is best to say as little as possible. The boys were by no means quarrelsome. At home

there would have been little likelihood of their getting thus involved; but off on a camping trip like this, the restraining home influences were relaxed and the new, ruder conditions brought out latent animal instincts. Besides, more than half the boys had been strangers to one another previously, and Malcolm Knox was a very proud, sensitive, high-spirited lad.

They had all been sitting amiably close together in the tent, for an hour or more, before a difference of opinion between Malcolm and Schermerhorn set them to arguing and then contradicting one another. When Schermerhorn sarcastically intimated that Malcolm didn't know what he was talking about, Roscoe and Charley expressed opinions on opposite sides. Porter then threw in a contemptuous remark about 'stowaways' who ate too much deer liver. At this acute stage of the debate, Malcolm's fist shot out suddenly, and the row was fully started before any of the boys could take sober second thought.

To lecture the boys would have magnified a disagreeable episode; so I merely remarked, 'This is silly as well as rowdy, boys; let's have no more of it.'

A sudden conviction had fallen on me that I had been very remiss in not bringing along either games or books, with which to beguile wet days in camp. If seventeen boys are shut up all day in

a tent, without means of diversion, they will be pretty apt to quarrel with one another.

Louis had informed me that some sportsmen were camping two miles above, at the mouth of Sourdnahunk Stream, and while Daddy Green and Buggy were preparing the noonday meal, the Indian and I paddled up the river. Our neighbors proved to be a party of New York gentlemen, with one of whom I was acquainted. Fully appreciating my needs they kindly loaned me two books, both of them wholesome tales of adventure.

Thus reënforced, I returned to my boys with good hopes and, although several of them had already read the books, we took turns at reading aloud, and passed the afternoon pleasantly. And the memorandum which I made in my notebook that evening was, 'Never take a party of boys to camp again without three or four interesting books for rainy days.'

For a marvel, no one was taken ill that day, and on account of the confinement to camp, no one got hurt, save for the slight contusions resulting from the forenoon skirmish. Throughout the evening, till ten o'clock, we continued to read aloud by lantern light, in the larger tent; and interest in the story waxed so keen that even the guides edged in to listen.

Porter, Schermerhorn, Malcolm, and Charley Bowen were especially good readers. Each in

turn read ten pages, distinctly and not too rapidly. One thing only troubled me: I was sorry to observe a disposition on the part of Porter, Schermerhorn, Herbert, and several others, to take sides against Malcolm in almost everything, and to notice that he appeared to feel and resent it keenly. However, they all seemed in good spirits and peacefully inclined when we said good-night, and I purposely selected Porter and Malcolm to lodge with Gordon, Herbert, and me in the smaller tent, that night.

It was still raining furiously next morning, and the Abol brooks had begun to roar hoarsely up the Katahdin ravines. The day did not open auspiciously. Roscoe had taken cold; he was sneezing and complained of a sore throat. Little Jimmy Knox, too, looked blue and ill; he shivered constantly and said he had been cold all night. As he was manifestly a frail boy, I took him to the smaller tent, gave him two-grain doses of quinine once an hour, and put his skin in a glow with a coarse towel. Afterwards I wrapped him up warmly in three blankets.

Roscoe was also 'doctored' in a similar manner; and had his throat protected with a compress. Boys from luxurious homes are wholly unhardened to the dampness of tent life during cold rainstorms.

While thus busied, I thought that I heard high words out at the larger tent, but when I went to

investigate, all appeared peaceful. The boys were dressing, getting ready for their breakfast.

After breakfast Jimmy Knox had a chill and I was occupied with him for an hour or more. Then I gave one of the adventure tales to the boys in the larger tent to resume their reading, and sat down in the smaller tent to read from the other book to Roscoe, Gordon, and Jimmy; I wanted to keep an eye on Jimmy. It was still raining, and all were under cover — at least I thought so.

About an hour later Louis looked into the tent where I was sitting and handed me a folded, but wet bit of paper. Opening it I found the following note, written carefully with a lead-pencil:

MR. STEPHENS: — I have set off for home. It was this way. The other boys are down on me. If I stay there will be more trouble. I am ashamed of what happened yesterday, and of course I have been ashamed all the time, of the way I joined the party. I thought it over all night and this seems the only honorable thing for me to do. So I am taking myself out of the way. Please don't bother one moment about me. I can find my way back all right. I've got my gun, and some soda-crackers and cheese in my pocket. I'm all right.

I want to thank you for your kindness to me. I take this course to relieve you of any further trouble on my account. I do not want to stay and spoil the good time. But please keep Jimmy and let him return with you. He's just a kid and does nobody any harm. He has money for his tickets, and so have I. Please don't take any notice of my absence. I'm all right.

Respectfully yours

MALCOLM STUART KNOX

I realized just how the boy felt when he wrote those words. None the less, I was more alarmed than I had been at anything that had previously happened since we had left home. Not a few tourists and campers have been lost and have perished miserably in this wilderness. Malcolm would have forty miles to go on foot alone, and my first fear was that he would get lost.

‘Louis,’ I questioned, ‘when and which way did Malcolm go?’

The Indian did not even know that he had gone.

‘When did he give you this note?’

‘About an hour ago,’ replied Louis.

‘Why did you not give it to me then?’

‘Because he say no give it till an hour,’ explained Louis sourly. ‘He came to our tent and say give this you in an hour.’

‘And you did not see him go away?’

‘No — me? No — for sure!’ Louis insisted emphatically.

All five canoes lay at the landing-place. I went to look in the other tent; Hard Knocks was not there.

‘Boys,’ I demanded, ‘where is Malcolm?’

Ernest Canfield was reading aloud, but stopped short, and they all looked around. ‘He went out some time ago,’ Schermerhorn said. ‘I supposed he had gone to your tent to see how Jimmy was. He doesn’t like all of us very well, sir.’

‘That may be because you do not like him,’ I returned. ‘I’m afraid you have not treated him very well. Boys, Malcolm has left for home in the midst of this rainstorm. I am greatly concerned about him; there is danger of his being lost. I am going after him. I don’t know when I shall get back to you, but I put every boy here on his honor to do the right thing while I am away, and avoid further quarrels.’

I never saw boys who looked more conscience-stricken.

Some reflection convinced me that Malcolm would attempt to return as we had come, and would follow the river down to Medway. Calling Louis, I bade him make the lightest of the five canoes ready and put on his waterproof coat; I also donned my own and filled a cracker box with such eatables as were at hand. Within five minutes we were off, and under the impulsion of our two paddles the canoe glided swiftly down the river. We ran the Abol rapids, and afterwards, where running the rapids was not practicable, we took the canoe on our shoulders and trotted with it over the carry-paths.

All the while we kept watching every bend and crook, hoping to espy Malcolm, footing it along-shore, ahead. I still felt certain that he would follow the river. But the afternoon waned and we failed to overtake him. On emerging into the dead-water at the head of Debsconeag Lake,

some six or eight hundred yards above our former camping-place, Louis, who had been very grumpy and sullen during the trip, suddenly said,

‘Smellum smoke. Somebody make him camp here.’

I steered the canoe close under the shadows of the bank-alders, and we approached quietly.

CHAPTER V

CLIMBING MOUNT KATAHDIN

THE canoe glided forward in the shadow of the alders, close inshore, and presently I caught sight of the runaway Malcolm sitting on a log beside a little fire. He had reached our old camp at Debsconeag and was drying himself at the fire, for now the rain had ceased. He did not see the canoe beneath the alders, and, when we had come within sixty or seventy yards, I said, 'Good-evening, Malcolm.'

In an instant he was on his feet, gun in hand. With his purpose to escape still strong, he darted away and hid behind a clump of birch sprouts forty or fifty feet from the fire.

'Oh, I see you!' I called out, laughing. 'No more of that, Malcolm; come out and be sociable.' And landing, I went toward him.

His shamefaced looks as he came forward were pathetic. 'I thought I had better leave, as I wrote you,' he remarked apologetically.

'Oh, yes, I got your note,' I assented, 'but I think otherwise; I could not possibly let you go away like this. We will camp here to-night and return to Abol in the morning.'

Malcolm did not reply.

'Now, Malcolm,' I insisted, 'I know how you

feel; you meant to do the right thing. But it is all nonsense, this quarrel, and the other boys regret it just as much as you do. I want you to go back with me and say no more about it.'

'If you really think I ought to go back, I will,' he consented after a moment. 'But those fellows must stop going for me; I can't stand it!'

'They will stop,' I promised; 'they are sorry for the trouble.'

We made as good a supper as we could, dried our clothing before the fire, and out of the canoe and two waterproof coats contrived a shelter, open on one side to the fire.

The coffee had put Louis in better humor, and he amused Malcolm by 'calling' moose through his hands, after the fire burned down to embers. We heard no moose reply, but about an hour later, as we were falling asleep, one came out among the water maples on the point across the arm of the lake. There he challenged, smashed dry brush with his antlers, and raged about for a half-hour or more. Malcolm was greatly excited and Louis would have set off to kill the creature had I not forbidden it.

'He is very young, rampageous moose,' Louis explained. 'I get him pretty soon!'

'But not this night,' I objected.

At daylight it was still foggy and lowering, but the sky cleared when the sun rose. At six o'clock we were on our way back to Abol and reached

camp at one in the afternoon, having seen eleven deer as we came.

Several of the boys were fishing at the mouth of the Abol; but Porter, Schermerhorn, Roscoe, and Charley Bowen descended to the landing-place to meet us. I felt a little anxious as to what would follow, for Malcolm, I could see, was still resentful. But after I had left camp the previous day, the boys had talked it all over and had agreed on what ought to be done. When we landed, Porter came forward and said, 'I am sorry, Malcolm,' and offered his hand.

'I say the same,' Schermerhorn agreed heartily.

'Me, too,' added Charley. 'Sorry I hurt your feelings, Malcolm!'

'Put me down for the same!' echoed Roscoe. 'I was on Malcolm's side,' he continued, laughing, 'but I was in the row.' And that was the end of the matter.

Afterward fair weather enabled me to keep the boys so occupied that by nightfall they were ready to sleep; they had no time to quarrel.

'How many of you wish to climb Mount Katahdin?' I inquired the day after the reconciliation.

Of course they all wanted to go, and I informed them that we would set off immediately and ascend to the foot of the Great Slide, three thousand feet below the summit, before evening.

At the foot of the Slide we would camp for the

night; then we might be able to climb to the top during the next forenoon. After two or three hours spent on the plateau at the summit, we would come down to the temporary camp at the foot of the Slide and the following day return to our camp on the West Branch.

I could not take all the boys with me. Little Jimmy Knox was not in condition for so difficult a journey; Roscoe was still quite hoarse; as a result of stuffing himself with choke-cherries, Gordon was yet weak and languid; and Oteri appeared silent and listless, although I could not ascertain that he was really ill. Since to climb Katahdin is no holiday excursion, I decided to leave the invalids with Daddy Green, to whom I gave instructions to amuse them. They could fish, dig gum, and hunt — without a gun!

With the remaining thirteen boys I then crossed the river and we went up the lower of the Abol brooks for half a mile, in three canoes, entered the pine woods and followed the 'Katahdin path' for six miles up to the foot of the Great Slide. Louis led the way with the camp kit packed on his back; Shaddy followed with the food supplies, while Buggy was laden with sundry necessities for cooking; each of the boys carried a light pack consisting of his waterproof coat and one blanket. I took charge of our only gun.

Several mountain brooks had to be crossed; and altogether so many delays occurred that it

was six o'clock when we emerged from the woods at the foot of the Great Slide, which rises steeply upward for three thousand feet to the misty crest of the summit. Anything more beautiful than the trail up through the pine woods can hardly be found in America. Underfoot is a uniform carpet of pale green moss; on every hand rise the brown trunks of trees; and so dense is the lofty canopy of pine foliage overhead that only a dim light penetrates it, even at noonday.

Just as we reached the foot of the Slide a thunder-storm burst over the summit, and we made haste to gain shelter in a group of spruces to the right of the mountain trail. Here we made our night camp. The guides fashioned a small shed from sheets of spruce bark, then kindled a fire in front of it; and after a hearty supper of fried pork, boiled potatoes, and soda crackers, all slept well, although serenaded by two owls until after ten o'clock. The boys were sleepy next morning, but I wakened them to make their toilets at the cold brook which put them in the liveliest spirits.

After breakfast Louis led the way up the Slide, carrying a pack of crackers and cheese; Buggy brought up the rear with a can of water and a drinking-cup.

The boys climbed well, but found it tiresome, and, despite the coolness of the morning, several of them were soon hot and panting from the

rarefaction of the air. Before we were halfway up the mountain the can of water was in great request.

For the last thousand feet the way is over huge rough boulders, tilted one above another in a most formidable manner. Here one must climb on hands and knees. When within less than one hundred feet of the summit, Pinkham Stearns fell into a hole, bruising his face and painfully wrenching one wrist. To pull him out and patch him up occupied me for some time, and when I reached the top I found the other boys racing on the plateau.

We ascended the highest portion of the tableland where the cliffs fall sheer to a depth of more than two thousand feet. To the northeast extends a serrated ridge along which it is possible to make one's way for half a mile or more. This portion of the summit is made up of enormous masses of rough, angular stones which sometimes topple underfoot. I dared not allow the boys to venture far here, lest they should start an avalanche and slide off into the depths below. A drenching mist, too, was curling up and driving across this rocky spine of the mountain, and the wind was almost strong enough to lift a light boy off his feet.

We soon descended to a more sheltered part of the plateau, and lunched at a place near the 'Yoke,' or lowest portion, where stunted firs

grow to a height of not more than three feet. Here we made a fire.

Shortly after noon the air current across this lofty tableland changed and the turmoil of fogs ceased. The sky cleared, and immediately a grand view opened on all sides. The green wilderness below resembled a vast bed of verdant moss, on which were scattered, like fragments of a broken mirror, unnumbered lakes and ponds, all shining in the sunlight.

Perhaps the boys would have been more attentive to the scenery had they not discovered a profusion of blueberries and mountain cranberries on the Katahdin plateau. The blueberries were very large and fine and the boys, made hungry by their exercise, devoured them by the handful.

‘Will they hurt anybody?’ Malcolm asked. I thought not, for they seemed ripe, but too much of the best food in the world may prove injurious.

At about three o’clock we began the descent of the Slide, and reached our camp at the foot of it a little before six, without accident. Here we found Buggy, who had been left in charge of the temporary camp, frying something which he called lamb, and of which he seemed to have an abundant supply.

Now there is no flock of sheep within fifty miles of that place, and I was not long in con-

jecturing the real nature of this 'lamb.' But what could I do? A tourist in these wilds may be wholly sincere in his desire to observe the game laws, and yet be placed by guides in the position of a law-breaker.

A tourist does not like to denounce his own guide and have the man put in jail and fined; nor does he like to denounce himself to the game wardens and pay fines — at least, few do so. Of course we might have refused to eat the 'lamb,' but — its odor while frying was appetizing!

Owls again came about us that night, but the weary boys slept like logs, and none of us heard the wild beasts, probably bob-cats, which devoured or dragged away in the night all that remained of Buggy's 'lamb,' to his great disgust. He had, as he afterward declared, hung the deer up to a tree branch, six or seven feet clear of the ground.

Breakfast over, we set off downward to our camp on the West Branch, where we arrived about noon, having seen ten deer on the way, one of them a very large buck with spreading antlers.

Jimmy Knox and little Oteri were the only ones at camp when we reached there. Gordon and Roscoe had so far recovered that Daddy Green had taken them up the Aboljackamegus fishing, and they did not return until five o'clock when they had much to tell about a bear-trap

that Daddy Green had set. As we had brought no bear-trap, I did not understand this till the old guide informed me, somewhat sheepishly, that to amuse the boys he had rigged a 'drop' in the doorway of an old logger-camp on Abol Pond, some four miles distant, and had baited this improvised bear-trap with a hare and two trout.

Tired from their climb, the boys were content to remain quiet in camp during that afternoon and evening. My consent to their cramming themselves with blueberries had proved injudicious, for Porter, Ernest, and Brooks Lindenheim required dosing. Little Oteri, too, was still unwell. It was not easy to learn what ailed the Japanese lad. His symptoms, or his manner of describing them, bothered me very much. Fortunately I had brought several pounds of rice among our supplies, and I put Oteri on his customary boiled-rice diet, with good results. Perhaps the unusual food had disagreed with him.

Naught would serve next morning but that Roscoe and Gordon should visit their bear-trap, and the others were eager to accompany them, although there was not one chance in a thousand that a bear had been captured. Daddy Green had contrived the 'fall' in the doorway of the log cabin merely to amuse the boys. Since they persisted that 'there might be a bear,' I permitted Herbert, Arthur, Jimmy, Malcolm, Charley

Bowen, and Frank Merritt to go with Gordon, Roscoe, and Daddy Green to visit it. They carried their shotguns, but under promise not to load them on the way, or at all unless they should find a bear in the trap. I deemed this an entirely safe arrangement, forgetting how often the wildly improbable happens.

They had set off at seven o'clock, and, while I was dosing Oteri just before eleven, we heard excited shouts across the river. Daddy Green, Herbert, and Frank Merritt were over there, the boys gesticulating like maniacs and shouting, 'We've caught him! We've caught a bear! Come on! Come on, quick, and fetch the Winchester!'

But it was not till they had come across in the canoes to get us, and Daddy Green, with an odd grin on his old visage, had assured me that a bear had actually been entrapped, that I was able to credit it.

'What's this?' I questioned the old man. 'Some joke of yours? Hedgehog, I suppose.'

'No,' he replied, his weather-beaten features puckered in a prodigious grin, 'it's a b'ar.'

'And the bear hasn't got out of the camp?'

'No, it was the hoss camp that I rigged the drop door in; it's got a log and turf roof, ye know,' the old guide explained, still on the broad grin over the humor of the thing.

'But where did you leave the others — Gor-

don, Roscoe, and the rest of them?' I demanded.

'They're up thar, watchin' the b'ar. The other camp, the man camp, is close by the hoss camp. I told them to hoof it in thar ef the b'ar got out, and shet the door,' Daddy Green further explained. 'I should have stayed by and sent the youngsters arter ye, on'y I was afeared they'd get lost in the woods ef I let 'em go alone.'

The old guide's prudence was to be praised; but I was thinking of the boys 'watchin' b'ar,' or rather of their guns.

'Did you forbid them to load their guns?' I inquired anxiously.

'Yes, I told them they'd better not. But I'd like to see ye stop 'em arter they'd spied that b'ar and heerd him a-carryin' on thar inside.'

'Lead the way back there just as quick as you can!' I enjoined hastily, for visions of Malcolm, Arthur, Charley Bowen, Roscoe, and Gordon racing through the brush about the old horse camp, with guns loaded and cocked, were disquieting.

Naturally all the boys at camp, including the invalids, wished to accompany us to the bear-trap, and it was difficult to persuade them to stay behind. On second thought, therefore, I bade Daddy Green come on behind with all hands, and take care that not a boy loaded his gun. Then, crossing over to Herbert and Frank,

I bade them lead the way. On looking back as we entered the woods at the head of Abol Meadow, I saw every boy coming on the run, and little Oteri, who had no gun, was flourishing Buggy's big bread-knife.

The day was warm and we had far to go, but a lively fear as to what might be happening 'at the front' incited me to speed, which increased just as we came out in sight of Abol Pond, when I heard a gun fired, then another, and two more almost at once.

'The bear is breaking out!' cried Herbert, panting and wild with excitement. 'They were not going to fire unless he began to get out! Hear that! — and that!' as two more reports echoed from the wooded hillsides across the pond.

Soon we could hear the boys who were 'watchin' b'ar,' yelling as if at a fire. Judging from the sound, all six of them were firing as fast as they could replace cartridges in their guns. It was one continuous fusillade. Several times I heard spent shot dropping in the brushwood around us. The leaden pellets appeared to be flying promiscuously about the landscape, and when at last we came out in sight of the boys, the stumpy clearing in which they stood was so blue with powder-smoke that one could hardly see across it.

CHAPTER VI

DADDY GREEN'S BEAR-TRAP

WHEN I reached the place where the boys were besieging the bear, the little opening was blue with powder-smoke, guns were banging, and I could hear shouts of 'See there! He's digging out! See his old paw come out! Look at his old claws! Let him have it!' and then, *bang, bang* again, with fresh bursts of smoke.

The danger of approaching the gunners, who were mostly facing toward us, was emphasized by the passing whiz of a charge of shot; so I sent Frank back to bid Daddy Green and the others go around in the rear of the boys who were shooting into the horse camp where the bear was penned.

Meanwhile the shouting showed there was need of haste. 'There comes his head out!' cried one. 'Hear him growl! See that log wiggle! Let him have it, Gordon! Pepper his old head!' and then, *bang, bang, bang!* with 'Look out, Malcolm! Don't load a gun cocked!'

Availing myself of a momentary lull while they were reloading, I ran to the main camp and called a halt. 'Stand still, all of you!' I commanded. 'Now, order! Attention! I will see that the bear does not escape!'

By this time the others, with Daddy Green, dashed up, all hot, half-frightened, but eager to shoot a real bear. The Indian and Shaddy, too, had followed on behind us. Bugbee had remained at the West Branch camp. The excited boys were all shouting at once. Arthur Fairbanks's voice was running from end to end of the vocal scale, beginning with a bellow and finishing in a shattered squeal. It was only by dint of much shouting for order that I was able to command a truce, while I reconnoitered the horse camp.

Little wonder that the bear growled savagely when I approached; the poor creature's paws and nose were bleeding from small shot. Peeping through a chink in the cleated door which Daddy Green had rigged as a 'drop,' I saw a bear of average size.

No doubt it would have run away without fighting if it could have done so, but when it perceived my face through the crack, it jumped at the door with an ugly snarl, and then all the boys yelled in a chorus. Malcolm, Porter, and Arthur ran forward with their guns, and before I knew what Arthur was about, he had fired through an opening between the logs, at the back. The camp smoked at every crack.

The poor bear, crazy from fear and rage, growled and bawled, throwing itself against the door and sides of the camp. The old structure

was infirm; it shook and cracked audibly. I expected every moment to see the beast break out. The boys were as wild as the bear — all loading, yelling, and running up to fire between the logs, and the smoke was so thick that I could hardly see anything. In vain I shouted, 'Stop firing!'

Daddy Green, afraid of being shot in the *mêlée*, beat a hasty retreat to the rear of the main camp. The whimsical grin on the old fellow's face as he stood looking on was very comical. Shaddy, too, stood at a little distance, bewildered. Louis, who had now overtaken us, was crouching beside a stump, with his hands on his knees and his black eyes roving. Oteri, who had no gun, was thrusting the blade of the bread-knife between the logs, and little Jimmy came charging up with a stone in each hand.

I dragged Porter and Roscoe back by main strength, expostulating with them; and just then the bear broke the door down, dashed forth, and made for the woods. As his hide was packed with small shot, he might reasonably have been expected to be ferocious, but to escape seemed his only purpose. Releasing my grip on the two boys, I ran to get the carbine which I had laid down near the main camp, but Louis had already seized it and was pursuing the bear. He dropped on one knee and fired as the beast entered the brushwood, then gave chase again.

The boys overtook him, less than a hundred yards away, on the south shore of the pond — and there lay the bear, dead. Louis's first bullet had traversed the entire length of its body. It was apparently three or four years old, and weighed probably a hundred and fifty pounds.

Now the excitement changed to triumphal glee. For a long time those boys gloated over the bear, turning the body to and fro, examining the claws and opening its mouth. They will, no doubt, retain vivid memories of this all their lives. They had had a chance to fire their guns at a bear, and the hunter glow did not wholly die out of the eyes of some of them during all the rest of the day.

Louis attached a long withe to the carcass and the boys bore a hand at dragging it back to the main camp where the Indian hung it up to a tree-stub and dressed it off. 'Bear steak' was now the cry; and willing to give them all the bear they wanted, I sent Shaddy and Daddy Green back to camp for the cooking-kit, potatoes, and other supplies, also to fetch Bugbee.

Some palates cannot well distinguish good bear meat from prime young beef, but Malcolm, Porter, Roscoe, and Brooks declared that bear steak was the best they had ever tasted. Frank Merritt, Ernest, and little Jimmy could not eat it at first; they were squeamish over meat not sanctioned by custom. As for the much-

punctured skin of the bear, it was pegged up on the wall of the horse camp.

Although the place was not a pretty location for a camp, I found that the boys all wished to remain by the carcass of their bear. The sight of its black skin on the wall of the horse shed filled them with exultation. I therefore changed the projected route of our trip, and sent the guides back to Abol to break up our camp there on the West Branch, and take the tents, canoes, and outfit around to Katahdin Pond by water.

As our guides would necessarily be away from us during one night, we were obliged to shift for ourselves in the matter of collecting boughs for our beds, cutting wood for the evening camp-fires, and preparing our supper.

Brooks, Malcolm, Charley Bowen, Oteri, and little Jimmy were detailed to gather fir boughs — four big armfuls apiece. Frank, Lucas, and Pinkham were to clear out the main camp and put the long bunk in order for the fresh, new boughs, and the rest were to collect a big wood-pile. All desired a cheerful camp-fire and agreed to replenish it at hourly intervals till three o'clock the next morning.

There was but one camp axe, and with it Arthur Fairbanks set out to fell an old dry tree-stub. I bade the others range off and pick up dry stuff.

Having supper to prepare, including bear

steaks and potatoes for seventeen hungry boys, I was for the time too busy to give much heed to what was going on. All appeared to be at work. Some were fetching in boughs, others armfuls of wood, and at a little distance I could hear the cheerful strokes of the axe.

Suddenly a cry of distress caused me to drop the frying-pan and run out of the camp. I had barely turned the corner when I met Schermerhorn and Porter racing to inform me that Arthur Fairbanks had cut his foot.

‘Oh, he’s cut it clean open!’ cried Porter.

‘He’s bleeding awfully, sir!’ explained Schermerhorn. I ran at full speed toward the place where the axe strokes had lately resounded. There I found Herbert trying to keep Arthur still and to unlace his boot, and Arthur shrieking from pain and from fright at the sight of blood on his foot and over everything near it.

I calmed the wounded boy a little by telling him that woodsmen often hacked their feet and soon recovered, and at the same time I got the boot off and then the sock. The gash was an ugly one and bleeding dangerously; the corner of the axe had buried itself in the instep, penetrating the smaller bones. No wonder poor Arthur gave vent to his anguish in wailings.

At first I hoped to stanch the blood by flexing the foot upward, so as to close the wound, and pressing the sock on it; but I could not keep

Arthur quiet enough and, in fact, I soon found that the blood was gushing too profusely to make this expedient of any use. There was grave danger that he might bleed to death. I was obliged to apply a tourniquet, or, in other words, twist a handkerchief about his ankle with a stick and finally another above his knee, before the hemorrhage could be stopped.

Lacking means to close the wound with stitches, I brought the edges together and attempted to hold them up with bands of sticking-plaster; but when the tourniquet was slowly released, and the pressure of blood began again in the artery, the hemorrhage burst forth once more, and the tourniquet had to be reapplied in haste.

This occurred three times, to my dismay, although I continued to make light of it to the boys, for I dreaded a panic among them. At one time I feared that I should be obliged to open the wound, and, with no better light than that of the camp-fire, grope for the trunk of the artery. But most fortunately the fourth effort with tourniquet and adhesive plaster succeeded. It was eight o'clock before the bleeding was checked. For more than two hours we had done nothing but work and watch over Arthur's foot. Fearing that the blood might burst forth again, I sat beside him and kept the foot quiet till past midnight. Malcolm, Herbert, and Porter re-

mained at hand with handkerchiefs and sticks in readiness. Not till after nine did the others set about getting their supper.

There was danger that Arthur in his sleep might spasmodically extend his foot and dislodge the clot at the severed end of the artery; it seemed safer to watch him, and I did so, with a hand near his ankle constantly, until four o'clock next morning. Then Malcolm awoke and of his own accord came to take my place; thus I caught a nap of two hours.

Breakfast had then to be prepared, largely of fried bear meat. The boys had keen appetites, partly perhaps because Daddy Green had said that to live on bear meat for a week would make great hunters of them.

On waking at eight o'clock, Arthur seemed not much the worse for the loss of blood. We gave him a bear steak which Malcolm had broiled over the embers of the morning fire. I then added fresh strips of adhesive plaster to the dressing of the wound, and made a crutch for him, in order that he might not press his foot to the ground.

While thus employed, Herbert and Brooks came into the camp to tell me that they had caught sight of a mule at the farther end of the opening. They were wondering how that mule had come so far off in the woods. For the sake of peace and quiet I thought it as well not to tell them that their mule was probably a young

cow moose. Such an announcement would have meant instant pleadings for their guns which I had stacked in the farthest corner of the camp.

Yet it seemed too bad to deprive them of the opportunity of seeing a moose. 'Calling moose' had been one of the grand expectations of the trip, and they had been constantly interviewing Daddy Green on the subject. After a time I went out where the 'mule' had been observed, and perceived from the tracks in a wet hole that two moose had come to the borders of the opening and had turned back. I also heard a caribou 'cough' out in the rocky ground at the foot of Katahdin.

The guides joined us at five o'clock that afternoon. They had 'carried' the canoes into Katahdin Pond, and examined the 'Rhode Island boys' camp' — a hut in which two Rhode Island lads had once lived for three years. Not finding it in good condition, they had taken our outfit to the other smaller shanty, a mile farther along the pond shore. The following morning we went thither. Arthur was able to walk a little with the aid of his crutch, but in order that his foot should not be disturbed, I had Louis and Shaddy carry him on a litter contrived from two poles and a network of birch withes. Herbert and Brooks were detailed to carry a quarter of bear meat, slung to a pole between them.

When we hung this meat up at a corner of our

new camp on the pond, six or eight Canada jays fell upon it so ravenously that I gave guns to Herbert and Brooks to protect it. The place soon resounded to a lively fusillade, and five jays were disposed of. Mosquitoes were also ravenous here, and our face-nets proved useless; and oh, how those boys wished that mosquitoes could be disposed of by shooting with guns!

After supper I privately asked Louis if he thought he could 'call' moose here.

'What good?' he replied crustily. 'No shootum now.'

'No,' I agreed, 'there must be no shooting. But I should like to have the boys see or hear one.'

Louis went about his work of making bunks and I fancied that nothing more could be got from him; but presently he approached me and said, 'I go see. I go in one canoe to that littlum island in the pond over there,' he continued. 'By um by, when you hear me call, you go 'long pond shore up at that one cranberry bog, at head of dis pond. You hear moose come there. I call moose on that littlum island good many time,' he added as he went away.

After a while, without informing the boys where Louis had gone, I bade them listen outside the shanty for moose; and in the course of an hour we heard what sounded like a moose bawling, over on the island. It was Louis, imitating,

through a horn of birch bark, the long, wailing bellow of a cow moose. Immediately I had plenty of excitement on my hands. Leaving Daddy Green to care for Arthur, who was already undressed and in his bunk, I bade the others come along quietly, then led the way along the pond shore to the cranberry bog.

But although Louis continued calling, at intervals of fifteen or twenty minutes, we heard no response, and after remaining on the watch till nearly eleven o'clock we returned to camp. There were moose in the vicinity, however, and I decided to wait over another day, in the hope that a moose would yet come to the Indian's call.

Accordingly the same ruse was practiced on the succeeding evening, Louis going over to the island, and we proceeding quietly to the cranberry bog as before. The device had now been explained to all the boys. The wind was favorable, blowing in gentle breaths from the south; the night was warm, with a slight mist along-shore; the moon did not rise till nearly eleven o'clock, and it was not till the east grew light that Louis began 'calling.'

After a time we heard a crashing of brushwood over at the island, and for a moment I fancied that a moose had, unseen by us, swum off there. But in reality it was Louis himself making noises to delude moose on shore into believing that

there was another moose on the island 'challenging.'

This ruse succeeded, for soon we heard a grunt back in the woods on the shore of the pond, followed by a prodigious galloping through the brush. It was only with difficulty that I could now keep those boys quiet in the alder bushes. Oteri and Frank Merritt were so alarmed that they could hardly be restrained from bolting back to camp; for Shadwell, Daddy Green, and Bugbee had told them great stories of the ferocity of moose bulls.

Louis continued his challenging, and after a number of grunts we saw the moose enter the water at a distance alongshore and swim off to the island, its antlers glistening in the moonlight.

I was now apprehensive lest Louis should break the law and shoot the moose, for he had taken his rifle and the temptation must have been a strong one. I was not surprised when, a few seconds later, the loud bang of the heavy Winchester rang out on the still night air.

'There goes a fine of a hundred dollars for somebody!' I thought, since there was little likelihood that the game wardens would not learn of the killing. As for the boys, they were wild with expectation.

But Louis had merely fired over the moose's head as it emerged from the water. Thus saluted with a blast of gunpowder where it had expected



JACOB
• Bates
1907

ITS ANTLERS GLISTENING IN THE MOONLIGHT

to find a mate, the great animal wheeled and plunged into the pond again with a mighty splash. On the way to the island, it had swum silently, but now a herd of hippopotami could hardly have made a greater spattering. We could see its head very plainly as it made for the shore, and to give it a good send-off we all shouted at once.

In a marvelously brief space the moose gained the shore, and the crashes it made dashing through the undergrowth were plainly audible until it reached the bogs near Abol Pond.

'That ve'y hard moose to call next time,' Louis remarked as he paddled ashore a few minutes later. 'That moose him learn good deal to-night.'

CHAPTER VII

WIND

THE next day proved inordinately hot and sultry; and feeling languid after their late excitements, the boys appeared quite content to loaf about camp, lie in the shade, and pore over what was left of our reading matter. All around to the north, Katahdin loomed nearly five thousand feet above the tops of the spruce woods.

About two o'clock I caught a nap inside the log camp, but was presently wakened by gunshots and found Gordon and Lucas shooting jays that flocked round our pole of bear meat. Devoutly I wished there wasn't a gun in camp, save the two belonging to the guides. Nothing had caused me so much anxiety as those shotguns in the hands of the boys. That none of us had been hit on the day of the bear hunt was due more to good luck than anything else; yet I could not well deprive the lads of these their choicest possessions. If only I had stipulated with their parents at the outset not to allow firearms brought from home, we should have been much safer. Once off in the woods there was not much I could do except enjoin constant caution, and watch vigilantly.

As the afternoon advanced, thunder was heard

rumbling behind Katahdin; but the shower appeared to go down the East Branch of the Penobscot beyond the mountain. Shortly before five, however, a dense mass of cloud heaved up to the westward of that grim ridge and the sky rapidly darkened. Several of the boys had strayed to the pond shore for a dip near a gravel bar which I had previously indicated as a safe spot even for those who could not swim. I heard them shouting down there and hastily called them back. Never had I seen a landscape assume more menacing and gloomier aspects. The boys had now taken alarm. Within five minutes they were on the run, many of them with their clothing in their arms.

‘Boys, I don’t know what is coming,’ I warned them. ‘But hurry and get to cover inside the log camp here. Some sort of tempest is at hand!’

More from instinct than otherwise, we took refuge in the low log structure and had no more than reached its shelter when a portentous roar, accompanied by the ominous sound of falling trees, was heard, becoming instantly louder and nearer, till it swept overhead, seeming for the moment to lift the camp and us within it! Crash on crash resounded on every side. Trees were going down like ninepins. Three near-by spruces fell partially on the roof of the camp, the tops swishing and blockading the door. Some of the

younger boys actually screamed, several of them clinging to me in terror. It seemed as though we should be crushed there all together!

But after a few seconds the tumult passed on, the roaring grew momentarily less terrific, and within a minute had ceased entirely. I pushed my way out through the mass of green boughs in front of the camp door. The gloom was rapidly lifting; but the aspect of the whole locality was changed. Up to the northwest and down to the southeast of the camp, a lane had opened through the woods, looking as if a mighty scythe, wielded by giant hands, had cut a swath through the forest. The storm appeared to have come across the Katahdin ponds and progressed indefinitely to the southeast, yet did not look to have extended more than twenty or thirty yards in width.

With awestruck faces the boys came creeping forth after me. 'What was it, sir?' Jimmy Knox whispered, as if not yet quite daring to speak aloud.

'Boys,' I replied, 'we have been in extreme danger, but it has now passed. We have happened to be in the path of what Maine lumbermen call a "blow-down." In the West they are called tornadoes, or cyclones, such as you have often read of in the newspapers. They are not so common in New England, but sometimes occur and not infrequently leave traces of their passage

across the forests, in the form of uprooted and fallen trees.'

Very little rain had accompanied this tornado, but a few hailstones were seen. Until evening we were occupied with clearing the camp of the spruce tops, and meantime the boys harvested an abundance of chewing gum from the fallen trunks.

A quiet night came on. The pole of bear meat had blown away and was discovered in a mud hole fifty yards distant, with a half dozen jays fighting over it; but Bugbee washed it off and again fried steaks galore. The boys declared it had never tasted so good and was 'ripening' delightfully. Such appetites! I believe they would have devoured dry salt fish, uncooked. From the way hard-breads and marmalade were disappearing, it was apparent I must somehow get more food or soon beat a retreat to civilization. I had never realized till then how much it requires to ration an army and how completely a campaign must depend upon its commissariat and its supply trains.

Once or twice during this engrossing evening meal, we were considerably astonished to hear a dog howl plaintively at some distance from the camp.

'That's a lost dog!' Arthur Fairbanks exclaimed. 'That dog is in trouble! My people had a big old Saint Bernard dog once that howled three times, just like that, before it died!'

‘Perhaps that is your old dog come back to life,’ Gordon remarked ironically. ‘Better call him.’

A few moments later, however, a large black-and-white dog, in part hound by its looks, slowly approached to where we sat eating, dragging one hind leg painfully. We called out to it, and several of the boys, speaking kindly the while, made haste to examine its injuries. At first it was thought that the animal must have belonged to some camper and had been hurt in the blowdown that so lately had passed over us; and that, like as not, its master had also been injured or killed.

But further investigation of the creature’s wound rendered it evident that the injury had been inflicted by a bullet which had passed through its flank. The poor dog’s condition was pitiable, and exclamations of compassion arose from the boys who gathered about it; they couldn’t imagine how or by whom it had been shot. I had my own suspicions as to this, strengthened by a low word from the Indian.

‘Game warden, he shoot um,’ Louis muttered.

A warden had probably come upon the dog chasing deer, or feeding on one shot by law-breaking hunters. But I thought it best to say nothing of this to the lads, and allow them to make the suffering creature as comfortable as possible on a bed of boughs near the camp-fire. It did not appear to be hungry, or perhaps was

in too much pain to care for food. There was little the boys could do for it save pat its drooping head, offer it water, and give it words of pity. It would have been as well to put the animal out of its misery by a merciful shot; still I did not like to have Louis shoot it on account of the effect such an act would have on the boys' minds. So it lay there overnight, whining lugubriously at times.

During the following forenoon a game warden, named Swett, appeared at our camp, apparently to search for evidence of law infraction. He had been on the far side of Katahdin the previous day and had missed being caught in the blow-down. I showed him what was left of the bear and requested him to describe the difference between bear and deer meat, which he did promptly and to my considerable relief. But he inquired why we had not saved the scalp and ears of our bear and thus have been able to claim the 'bounty' that the State sets on the heads of these, our ursine fellow creatures. I could only reply that we had been too greatly occupied by the hunt to remember about this; and I bade Arthur, Malcolm, and Morris Chapman relate the circumstances — which they did with unction and greatly to the warden's amusement. All became again so animated as their account proceeded that even little Giartsu threw in a few remarks in his careful English.

This Japanese lad was clearly much of a curiosity to Warden Swett, who had never before seen a person of that nationality. I had invited the warden to lunch with us; and, while we were still sitting about the long table of slim poles which Buggy and Daddy Green had set up, he rose suddenly, said he must be going, and taking his carbine disappeared around the corner of the log camp. A moment later a loud report brought us all to our feet, with the idea that the gun had been discharged accidentally. But it was no accident, for on rushing to the other side of the camp we saw that Swett had just shot the wounded dog, lying there on its bed of boughs!

He laughed as we appeared, explaining that he had been in quest of that animal for some time and had shot at it twice before. 'There are three of them,' he added aside to me. 'They've turned wolves and have been running down deer for a year or two. They've got a den somewhere up Katahdin, on the south side.'

The boys, however, had failed utterly to understand these allusions and were thrown into a state of great indignation. Hard Knocks confronted Swett with fire in his eye. 'You cruel brute!' he cried. 'Shoot a poor wounded animal like that, would you!' and before I could interfere or explain, he had squared up to the warden and let out a blow straight at his nose. Porter, Gordon, Ernest, and Schermerhorn were closing in, too,

and I had no small ado to get inside the ring and push them off.

Warden Swett meantime was shaking with laughter, and for the moment that only added fuel to the fires of their wrath. These lads, indeed, seemed bent on mobbing our visitor. To stop them I had to explain and expostulate all in a breath; and even then several of them were but half appeased. In fact Swett finally departed in very bad odor with our youthful party. The poor dog was buried with something akin to military honors.

This incident of aroused temper, indeed, may have had some effect in producing the incident which occurred during the same afternoon, one which gave me not a little anxiety for the future of my party.

Shortly after one o'clock a drenching shower fell which drove us to the shelter of the log camp and made the woods too wet for excursions after the downpour had ceased. Most of the boys sat down to the perusal of 'Treasure Island' again, taking turns at reading aloud; and there was much comment and discussion concerning that charming narrative. Presently I heard Lucas Galbraith telling the others about the Apache Indians of Arizona. It appeared that his father, Captain Galbraith, had to do with guarding those intractable savages at their reservation — an arduous task for the military at that time — to

prevent them from raiding and murdering the white settlers. Lucas described the appearance of the noted Apache chief, Jeronimo, who had presented Captain Galbraith with a horse and a plaited lariat for the animal's jaw. Lucas pronounced the chief's name several times, calling him 'Heronimo,' placing the accent on the second syllable. Apparently this began to give offense to Malcolm, who at length remonstrated impatiently.

'I know that old chief's name. I've read about him in the newspapers. His name is Geronimo' (pronouncing it 'Jerryneemo,' with an accent on the double *e*). 'What makes you call it Heronimo?'

'Because that's the proper pronunciation,' replied Lucas.

'I know better,' objected Malcolm. 'That *J* oughtn't to be pronounced like an *H*.'

'But I tell you it is,' insisted Lucas. 'It is a Spanish word; and they pronounce *J* like *H*. Heronimo is the way my father says it and he is out there in that country and he knows!'

'Don't believe it,' retorted Malcolm bluntly. 'You can't make me believe that *J* ever ought to be pronounced like *H*!'

'Isn't it likely that Arizona folks know?' rejoined Lucas with spirit. 'And isn't it likely the chief himself knows how to pronounce his own name? And I tell you it is Heronimo!'

‘Huh! I don’t take stock in that, or anything else you are giving us here!’ cried Malcolm contemptuously.

‘Do you mean to tell me I lie?’ exclaimed Lucas, jumping to his feet.

‘Maybe you do. I shouldn’t wonder,’ agreed Malcolm, with provoking irony.

The words were no more than out when Lucas was upon him — and a battle royal was on, all over the camp floor. Arthur came running to call me where I was lying down for an hour in the larger tent, in the hope of making up a little back sleep, since everything had seemed to be going on peacefully. He spoke at my ear, ‘You’d better come, sir! Malcolm Knox is on the rampage. Lucas wouldn’t stand him and they’re having a pitched battle!’ he ejaculated.

Reaching the camp door without loss of time, I discovered Lucas on the floor with Malcolm holding him down, and Porter, Morris, and Gordon attempting to pull him away — Baby Knox pommeling them indiscriminately with puny fists, in aid of his brother. Right or wrong, it was always his brother first with ‘Baby.’ I succeeded in separating the youthful fighters and bade them get up. Lucas rose with dignity, dusted himself, and gazed at me with shame written large on his handsome face, though his nose was bloody; and his first words were to remind me of his promise to make as little trouble as possible.

‘I said I would make no trouble if you would let me come,’ he repeated. ‘But’ (pointing to Hard Knocks) ‘he called me a liar, sir, and what could I do?’

That wasn’t an easy question to answer, and I looked at Malcolm, who was also on his feet under half-guard of Porter, Morris, and Gordon.

‘Lucas said that *J* is pronounced like *H* and put on airs about it,’ muttered Malcolm, and wiped a contused eye. ‘Anybody knows better than that.’

A sufficiently slight cause for war, certainly! — but I remembered that our English ancestors once fought over the color of roses, and that wars depend less on the intrinsic value of the pretexts than on the inherent pugnacity of the combatants.

I have to admit feeling somewhat disgusted for the moment, but knew that nothing would be gained by reproaches. What I said was: ‘Boys, take half an hour to think this over. At the end of that time we will have a pow-wow. I shall have to ask you all what you think of this, and what we ought to do about it. We are off alone together in the heart of this great wilderness, and common sense tells us that we ought to stand by each other, instead of fighting. I want you to think it over and help decide on what we shall do for the future.’

At the end of thirty minutes, the boys gathered about our long table, all looking a little foolish. I asked Gordon to take a seat at the head and act as moderator. With some hesitation he complied, remarking that he wasn't altogether certain what a 'moderator' was, but supposed it to be a chairman. He consented to do what he could and hoped some one would advise him if he fell down. Thereupon I rose to my feet, struck a Websterian attitude, and shouted, 'Mr. Moderator and fellow citizens!' (for it is generally best to keep a situation of this sort in as light a vein as possible.) 'I've called a pow-wow in order to ask a delicate question. During the less than two weeks since we started on this really delightful excursion together, there have been three fights and another half-fight, and what I want to ask is if you don't think that three and a half fights is too many for so brief a time! I should like,' I added, 'to obtain the opinion of this meeting on the subject. Perhaps the moderator will open the question for discussion.'

'I don't believe there is any need to discuss it,' was Gordon's opinion. 'It has been disgraceful. We all know it,' he concluded. And a general shout of 'That's right!' arose.

'This sounds unanimous,' I remarked. 'And now, if it isn't too inquisitive, I would like to inquire what it was that started this last out-

break; for you well remember that I was slothfully sleeping at the time.'

A minute of uneasy silence followed, then Gordon said that it had started from what Lucas had begun to relate to them about the Apaches in Arizona, and the way he pronounced the name of Chief Jeronimo. 'He called it Heronimo,' explained Gordon. 'Malcolm declared it couldn't be right. They disputed over it till finally the lie was passed and they went at it!'

Lucas now addressed the meeting — speaking a little thickly through a visibly enlarged nose — and requested that I decide the matter, whether he or Malcolm had been right.

'Yes, sir, which of us was right?' questioned Malcolm.

'This is placing me in the delicate position of arbiter,' I observed. 'But since you ask it, I feel bound to tell you what I know of this. Three years ago, when I was in the Southwest, I went to see the Apache prisoners at their reservation and was introduced to this Apache chief (a grim old fellow he was, too!), and I feel bound to say that the officer who introduced me, as well as every one else there whom I heard speak the chief's name, pronounced it Heronimo, as Lucas told you. I believe that it is also a fact that in many words of Spanish origin, the letter *J* is pronounced as though it were an *H*.'

Quite a stir followed. Lucas sat very quiet;

but several of the other boys exclaimed, 'There you are, Malcolm! What about it?'

Malcolm had turned very red; he looked savage. For a whole long minute I feared he would not rise to the occasion and do the honorable thing. But he did.

'Then I was wrong,' he muttered at length; and a moment later he turned to Lucas, saying, 'I'm sorry, Lucas. I apologize.'

'Nothing could be fairer than that!' I exclaimed. 'He has done all a gentleman can do'; — and the boys clapped enthusiastically.

'Is there any other business to come before this meeting?' Gordon asked. 'If not, a motion to adjourn will be in order.'

'Yes, one thing more, Mr. Moderator,' I said. 'I have been much pleased with the way our pow-wow has been conducted, and it occurs to me that it might be a good plan for us to organize so as to work together a little better than we have been doing. Here we are far from civilization, in the wilderness, and pretty nearly out of reach of the Law. We are alone by ourselves, like a little tribe or nation on a far-off island. We ought to stand by each other and work together. So what do you say to organizing a new republic with a Government of our own? We shall not need many officials, of course, but we might have a President, a Field-Marshal to execute the President's orders, a Secretary to keep the re-

cords, and a Supreme Court, composed of three Judges to decide all questions that arise.'

This won instant approval, and Arthur Fairbanks shouted, 'I nominate you, sir, for our President,' the others crying, 'Second the motion!'

'Many thanks for the honor you extend to me,' I hastened to say. 'But it is impossible for me to accept, since I am already holding the office of Commissary-General, and must act in that capacity immediately to secure a fresh supply of food. Our provisions are becoming rapidly exhausted. By to-morrow or next day, an expedition must be sent to Medway for more foodstuff. But' (for a happy idea suddenly occurred to me) 'I nominate Mr. Malcolm Knox for President!' There was silence for a moment; then Malcolm cried,

'Oh, no! A nice fellow I would be for President! Why, I'm the worst law-breaker in the party!'

But the other boys who had begun to see the point, now shouted, 'Knox! Knox! We elect him. He's elected!'

'Malcolm, you have been nominated and elected,' I affirmed, laughing. 'Now hold up your right hand and be sworn in as President of the new Katahdin Republic. Discharge your duties faithfully, so help you.'

Malcolm looked abashed at first, then, with

a glance around, he straightened up and I observed a look of determination suddenly overspread his strong young face. From that moment I had no further doubt that Malcolm would go right.

Porter Canfield was elected Field-Marshal with full powers to arrest and hold for trial any one behaving in a manner prejudicial to good order. Morris Chapman was made Secretary, Arthur Fairbanks, Gordon Ames, and Ernest Canfield became Judges of the Supreme Court. The rest of the party then resolved itself in a Congress to consult together and make such laws as the general good of the new Republic might require. We were thus one of those happy nations where every one holds office!

I had planned to deliver a tight little address on the advisability of controlling one's temper, even under excessive provocation, but I now perceived that this would be superfluous. Unnecessary admonition is a nuisance and often does more harm than good.

Sometime after we adjourned, I perceived that Malcolm was seeking to have a word with me in private and gave him the chance.

When we were alone he said, 'Mr. Stephens, I've got an awful temper, but I'll hold it down from this time on if I have to dig a hole in the ground and bury my head.'

I hoped he would say no more about it; but

he seemed to think that some further explanation of his disposition was needed. 'I guess I get it from my parents,' he confessed, then went on to tell me more than I considered decorous for him to reveal to any one outside his own family. 'My father has a violent temper,' he told me. 'My mother, too, is high-tempered. They often get very angry with each other, and don't live together for months at a time. So I suppose it is no wonder that I am such a firebrand!'

'Heredity is a deep problem, Malcolm,' I replied, and, as soon as I could without hurting his feelings, changed the conversation to other less personal subjects.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOUNT KATAHDIN REPUBLIC

ANOTHER dog came to us that evening, not a wounded dog this time, but one that appeared to be attracted by the boys' merry young voices at the supper table, or else perhaps by the smell of food. It was a large black-and-white mongrel Newfoundland and hound, for a guess; and I surmised it was one of those three that Game Warden Swett had been in quest of, on a charge of dogging deer. It was first espied a few steps away from the group at the table, looking on in an interested manner and enthusiastically wagging its tail. When spoken to, it approached at once with every appearance of pleasure. If the animal were really one of the outlaws, it had apparently tired of wild life and wished to join its fortunes with those of mankind again.

Boys take naturally to a dog of any stripe. This one was at once fed and made free of the camp. Daddy Green and Shaddy warned them, however, that they would better keep their new-found pet out of sight of the wardens.

That same evening we had to take an account of provisions which were running startlingly short; and early the following morning I sent off Bugbee and Shaddy in two canoes for a fresh supply,

entrusting the former with the sum of sixty dollars. They 'carried' back to the West Branch near Abol, then proceeded down the river, as we had come, to Medway.

When they were setting out, Louis came to me and asked to accompany them. 'I helpum paddle,' he urged. 'I helpum carry canoe. Get back sooner.'

I consented, but he still hung about me and presently asked for his pay to date. To this I demurred, suspecting that, if he received it in full, he might desert me and fail to return with Bugbee and Shaddy. When I offered him ten dollars, reserving thirty-five till the end of our trip, he immediately cooled about going. 'My moccasins wear out. I no thinkum!' Louis was efficient in many ways, a fine guide, a good shot and a safe man to be with in the woods, but an ever-ready liar and wholly untrustworthy in the matter of his agreements.

We had now to rely on Daddy Green for our cooking, which was so much like relying on a broken crutch that after Bugbee left, that morning, I found it necessary to help him prepare breakfast. While I was thus vexatiously employed, Arthur came to me saying that Louis had taken his carbine and gone up toward the foot of Katahdin, and that he had attempted to call away their new dog. The dog, however, refused to follow an Indian, not liking the aboriginal odor.

‘Did he tell you why he went?’ I questioned.

‘Said he was going “shootum half-moose,”’ Arthur replied, laughing.

What a ‘half-moose’ might be wasn’t clear; nevertheless I felt very uneasy, knowing that game wardens were about.

We still had several quarts of dry beans remaining from our stores, also salt pork, and I set Daddy Green to dig and fire a bean-hole, since it was not the part of prudence to utilize all our resources of food, in case Bugbee and Shaddy should be delayed in returning with supplies. The beans being very dry required parboiling before baking and, after soaking them awhile, I put two quarts of them to boil slowly over the camp-fire.

Beans, harvested the previous season, can sometimes be baked without parboiling; but much older beans — these were five or six years old, I feel sure! — had been sold us at Medway, and had proved very hard and obdurate. I had this last potful boiled for two hours steadily until the skin would finally wrinkle when blown upon with the breath.

Digging the bean-hole, firing it, and afterward burying the pot of pork and beans within it, was always an operation of interest to the boys. They bothered Daddy Green with offers to assist, also with humorous comments on his mode of procedure.

‘Leave that bean-hole alone! Don’t build any more fire in it!’ I heard him shouting plaintively more than once as the forenoon passed.

The afternoon drew on, but Louis failed to return. I had not much fear that he would desert us, but had little notion what form his resentment at not getting his money might take, and thought as likely as not that he would do something reprehensible.

Just at dusk, while I was helping Daddy prepare our evening meal, Malcolm came to inform me that Louis had come back and was hanging up what looked to be a heavy quarter of meat in a tree fifty yards or more back in the woods. Thereupon I went to interview the poacher.

‘Louis, what have you shot?’ I asked.

He failed to reply till I had repeated the question, then said sullenly, ‘Must have something eat!’

‘Have you shot another deer?’ I demanded.

‘No shootum deer,’ he denied.

‘But what have you shot? Louis, you have broken the law again!’ I insisted.

‘No breakum law. No law agin shootum half-moose,’ he affirmed brazenly.

‘What do you mean by “half-moose”?’ I questioned. ‘There is no such animal. What have you killed?’

‘Me callum half-moose,’ Louis persisted. ‘He

have horns like moose, but only half as big. Law no say half-moose,' he argued.

'No, I dare say it doesn't specify half-moose,' I agreed. 'But what you have shot is probably a caribou, for I have been told there are still a few caribou left in "hell's fifty acres," at the foot of Katahdin. There's where you have been hunting all day, I presume.'

'My folks all say "half-moose." We never callum callibou!' Louis declared stoutly.

There was no doing anything with Louis, save perhaps to pay him off and send him home! — which I was loath to do. I was much too short-handed. I guessed, moreover, that this was just what he hoped would happen! Meantime the days were hot; the meat would soon spoil; and rather shamefacedly I bade Daddy Green fry a reasonable number of panfuls and feed the entire party. The recalcitrant Louis had indeed already kindled a little camp-fire of his own, out near his quarry, and was toasting choice tidbits for himself.

At about ten that night a violent shower broke over the summit of the mountain, accompanied by dazzling flashes of lightning so bright and vengeful that Baby Knox, Morris, and Ernest came hurriedly from the tents to join Herbert, Porter, Gordon, and myself in the log camp. Still another squall dashed down over Katahdin sometime later, and the following morning was

much cooler. Windy weather prevailed all day and we heard numerous tree-falls off in the forest.

Considerable excitement also attended what Daddy Green tried to make the boys believe was the lonely cry of a strange species of creature called a 'tree-squeak.' We could hear it at times, but a long way off in the woods. Several of the boys were inclined to credit Green's yarns that it was a living creature.

'Tree-squeaks live a wholly arboreal life,' the old man told them, and never were seen on the ground. Generally they were very quiet, but in windy weather they sometimes cried out discontentedly — as they were doing that evening. In short, Daddy was attempting to square accounts with Gordon, Arthur, and Porter for the many jokes they had played on him. The boys did not half believe him; but they exchanged odd glances whenever that long-drawn, piercing note reverberated through the darkened forest. When they appealed to me, I bade them make Daddy Green go with them next morning and find the tree, or trees, where the creature had its lair.

While I was assisting Daddy in his awkward labors to get breakfast for the party, President Malcolm was holding a pow-wow, of his own calling, on the conduct of Louis, who had shot game contrary to law. I overheard stray bits of the

argument as I opened the bean-hole and extricated the pot from the still hot embers in which it was embedded.

‘That riotous and ungovernable Indian has shot another deer of some sort’ — thus Malcolm inveighed. ‘... He breaks the laws right along, for he knows that if the wardens find him out, he is not responsible himself for it. The fines or the jailing will fall on our hard-worked Commissary-General. What is worse, Louis has involved us all in his lawlessness, for we have been sharing the meat right along. The question is, what’s to be done? What ought to be done? I don’t feel right about it.’

‘Nor I either,’ echoed Lucas, and several of the others appeared to confirm the sentiment, though I heard two or three of them laugh and remark, ‘Let the wardens sweat. They can’t do much after we have eaten the venison!’

‘But that is no way to talk!’ cried Gordon. ‘We’ve got our responsibilities as well as other folks.’

‘That’s so,’ chimed in Morris and several other citizens of the new Republic. ‘We’re not up here to play the sneak, or cut up and let others bear the blame of it’ — meaning, I presume, the harassed Commissary-General, who had at that moment painfully burned his fingers on the bean-pot!

‘But what d’ye want me to do about this?’

demanded Field-Marshal Porter, somewhat anxiously. 'You don't expect me to arrest that confounded Indian, do you? He looks as if he would as soon kill anybody as not.'

'Field-Marshal,' replied President Malcolm sternly, 'you must be ready to do your duty whenever you are called on. I now order you to go and ask Louis to come here. Tell him that we boys want to speak to him.'

Porter looked reluctant, but finally set off and drew near Louis at his fire. I could not hear what he said to him; but after awhile Louis followed Porter to the large tent round which the boys had gathered; he was grinning hardily. Malcolm bade all stand up and approach, then addressed himself to the Indian with a remarkable show of magisterial dignity.

'Louis,' said he, 'you know better than to kill deer, just as well as anybody else. You know it is against the law, and that somebody may have to suffer for it, if you don't. Now hear this, Louis. If you shoot another deer while you are out with us, the fine, forty dollars, will be taken out of your wages when we go back to Medway. And if you shoot another caribou ——'

Malcolm had got as far as this with his warning when a commotion was observed out where the Indian had camped. The new dog that was hanging about had improved the occasion to pull down the quarter of venison and help himself.

Louis dashed back muttering maledictions, and, catching up his carbine, shot the dog dead before so much as a plea could be offered in its behalf.

Uproar followed. I really feared the boys might do violence to the Indian. Two of them sprang to get their guns from the stack inside the large tent. Dropping the rôle of cook, I ran to intervene. I never saw an angrier party of boys. Gordon rushed up to Louis with doubled fists.

‘Do you know what ought to be done to you?’ he howled. ‘You ought to be tied to a tree with wood piled round you, and burned at the stake, as you and your tribe used to burn white folks!’

Louis looked as if he would like to see him try it; but by the time I had reached them, Malcolm had interfered. ‘Get back, boys. No fighting!’ he ordered. ‘*I command all to keep the peace.*’

The regularly constituted authority having interposed, I stood back — as a good citizen should — ready to help if called upon. Somewhat later I took opportunity to remonstrate with Louis for killing the dog.

‘Oughter shotum. Him dog deer. Warden shootum,’ he said defensively.

So much ill feeling had arisen between him and the boys that, knowing his revengeful nature, I decided it would be better and safer all round to discharge the Indian, pay him, and let him go. But on second thoughts I delayed doing so, for I surmised that, if I sent him off, the fellow would

go to the wardens and lodge information as to the slaughter of the deer he had previously shot. It would have been quite like him to do that and to declare on oath that I had bidden him kill them to secure meat for my party. Indeed, as it was, I had some fears of going to jail before I could get back home with my boys. Privately I conferred with the President of the Republic as to this. 'What would you do, Malcolm, under the circumstances?' I questioned. 'Louis is capable of this and more.'

Malcolm reflected, and again I observed that look of resolution appear on his face.

'This is what I would do,' he replied. 'Watch our chance when Louis is unarmed and his carbine out of reach, then overpower and imprison him in the old log camp until we can call two wardens and have him taken out under arrest and tried. All of us boys will testify against him and exonerate you. We will land him in the pen!'

I had some difficulty in dissuading Malcolm from making immediate resort to such drastic measures. Reluctantly he gave up his project.

'But Louis is a bad one,' he insisted. 'He may play us some sort of scurvy trick if we don't get the start of him and knock him out!'

It was pretty plain that Malcolm would have no scruple about 'knocking out' a prospective enemy and — to quote Josh Billings — would get

his blow in first, if possible. In fact I was a little afraid that Malcolm was the type of President who in weak republics become Dictators.

A practical question now arose. Somewhere up in 'hell's fifty acres' lay the carcass of a caribou which our Indian had shot — the same from which he had brought in a hind quarter the previous night. Was it to be left lying there to spoil or be eaten by wild animals?

I advised the President to refer the question to the three Judges of the Court; but Malcolm thought it would be better to discuss it in a general pow-wow and put it to vote. A pow-wow was therefore called at once. Daddy Green sat looking on; and we saw Louis hanging about a little way off, pretending to prepare wood for the camp-fire. Several of the boys spoke their minds, the most of them agreeing with Gordon, who declared that there was no sense in letting good venison lie exposed and spoil even if the caribou had been unlawfully killed.

'Besides,' added Lucas, 'the warden may smell it and discover it later. Then he would accuse us anyhow, and we should be in the bad position of having done it on the sly. So I move, Mr. President, and Mr. Commissary, that we go get it and eat it. Might as well now. No good in losing it.'

The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

'But suppose the warden comes along, as he

may do any minute, and finds the meat hanging up here and us subsisting on it?' asked Porter. 'What then?'

'Well,' remarked Herbert, 'we could all make oaths as to the facts of the killing and why we had done as we did.'

'Swett wouldn't believe it,' objected Morris. 'He might put us all under arrest. We'd have to shell out for the fine, anyhow. Better hide it and say nothing. It isn't as if we were really to blame. None of us did this shooting.'

But Malcolm scoffed at this. 'That wouldn't work,' he assured them. 'Let's do nothing underhand. It would all come out later anyway. We will get the meat and eat it while it is good — and meet the situation the best way we can afterward.'

There was some further discussion and the whole party voted to draw up a statement of facts, in writing, and sign it.

On the back of one of my bills for supplies at Bangor, Porter and Gordon wrote the following narrative of the affair which afterward figured as an affidavit.

Louis Maccabeson, our guide, has shot a caribou and that, too, after being repeatedly forbidden to shoot deer and strictly charged to obey the game law. We hereby accuse him of the offense. We have eaten a part of the meat, but this was merely to keep it from spoiling and proving an unnecessary loss.

All sixteen boys signed below, even little Oteri, who subscribed something that looked like a snarl of bird tracks, but which was probably his name. Daddy Green and I also affixed our signatures. With a wink Gordon remarked that Louis should also sign.

'Perhaps we can get him to do it,' Lucas assented. 'That would be the crowning stroke — and he ought to!'

Thereupon Gordon and Porter took the paper and went out where the Indian was still pretending to break up fuel. 'We want you to sign with us, Louis,' Gordon told him offhand. 'We all have put our names down. It is about our trip up here; you can read it'; and he offered him the paper with the pencil. Louis regarded the document dissentiently.

'Me no writum. No readum,' he objected at length.

'Never mind that,' Gordon said reassuringly. 'You can put down your mark and Porter and I will witness it.'

Louis demurred. He seemed suspicious, but was clearly puzzled.

'Oh, come now!' urged Gordon. 'See, all the rest of us have signed it and we want you to do so.'

At last, looking greatly badgered, Louis took the pencil and made an awkward cross at the bottom of the paper. Gordon then inscribed

Louis's name on each side of the cross as by custom sanctioned in case of illiteracy:

His
Louis + Maccabeson
Mark

As witnessed by Gordon Ames and Porter Canfield Jr. Coming back, Gordon handed the paper to Malcolm with a wise look, and the boys all turned hastily away, 'too full for utterance,' so to speak!

'Now if he lies, we have got him,' Malcolm announced to me aside. 'The testimony of the whole of us and his own confession ought to pin him down to the truth.'

'Do you think Gordon and Porter did the square thing in persuading Louis to sign that paper in the way they did?' I questioned.

'No, they didn't,' was Malcolm's prompt reply. 'They fooled him. But 'twas only right that he should sign it. He ought to.'

'You don't approve of it, then?'

'No,' replied Malcolm frankly. 'If Louis was square himself, or was anything but a liar, I wouldn't let it go so!'

'A little mixed, isn't it?'

'I suppose it is,' agreed Malcolm, laughing. He turned away but returned a moment later. 'Do you want me to rip it up?' he asked earnestly. 'I will, if you say so.'

‘Malcolm, I do not feel quite competent to pass on it,’ was all I answered, but I have always since felt a little uneasy in my mind concerning it.

Toward noon I discovered Louis skulking down by the pond, and sent him with Green to fetch the remainder of the ‘half-moose’ to camp, for present consumption. Morris, Gordon, and Ernest accompanied them. Two hours later in the day they returned fetching a hundredweight or more of the caribou meat; and the boys gave a wonderful account of that singular tract up near the foot of the mountain to which woodsmen have given the formidable name that many dislike to see in print.

‘Never saw anything like it for rocks!’ Gordon exclaimed. ‘There are huge rocks by the hundred, jagged ones as large as houses, with bushes growing round them. You have to crawl amongst them and go round and about till you don’t know which way you are heading, whether north or south! Never saw such a place!’

‘There’s game in there, too,’ declared Morris. ‘We heard deer or caribou running; and there are hard-trodden trails leading in among the rocks.’

‘Louis said he “smelled a bear,”’ Ernest said, laughing. ‘We boys didn’t smell anything, but I guess we don’t know how a bear smells,’ he explained.

A marvelous locality is 'hell's fifty acres.' Game wardens term it the caribou's last retreat in Maine. From this fastness they climb up, during certain seasons, to feed on the plateau at the top of the mountain.

The earlier part of the day had been so occupied with various matters, pleasant and otherwise, that we did not get off to hunt that mysterious animal, the 'tree-squeak,' till late in the afternoon. Proceeding in the direction whence we had heard the noises the preceding evening, we came at length into a low, heavily wooded tract along the north shore of the easternmost Katahdin Pond. Here in a little darkly shaded cove stood an immense and hoary hemlock, against which another tree, now quite dead and denuded of its bark, had fallen and lay, lodged high up toward the top, forty feet or more from the ground. Apparently it had hung there for years. The indications at the stump, where it was broken near the earth, were that it was a hollow tree — a swamp maple, I conjectured. We also discerned a hole in the trunk, up near the point where it rested against the big hemlock.

Daddy Green regarded both trees thoughtfully. 'I ruther guess this 'ere's the tree the critter lives in,' he affirmed with an attempt at great seriousness which did not wholly impose on the boys.

‘How big do you suppose he is, Daddy?’ Porter asked, to quizz him.

‘Oh, wal, as big’s a dog, mabbe. Some’s bigger’n others!’ replied Daddy, offhand. ‘Some gits very large. But this ’ere one, I took from the way it hollered, was ’bout medium-sized, and I shouldn’t wonder a mite ef it had its nest in that ’ere hole we can see up in that dead tree. Knock on it, some of ye, mabbe ye can skeer it out.’

Picking up a stone Lucas beat on the tree-trunk, the others standing by with broad grins of unbelief. To the astonishment of all, a black head with queer buff jowls suddenly appeared in the hole aloft, and glared savagely down.

‘By Jove, he was up there after all!’ Gordon muttered with an inquiring glance at me.

‘Wal, what did I tell ye?’ cried Daddy Green exultantly, though evidently the old man was as much surprised as any one. Its head looked larger than that of a pine marten, larger and darker-colored.

One of the boys, Brooks Lindenheim, fired his gun at it — for several of them had brought their guns. The head drew back, but immediately reappeared. ‘Don’t shoot at it,’ I advised. ‘If it is a “tree-squeak” we ought to take it alive in the interests of science, for I happen to know there isn’t one in any museum or park in this country — or any other.’

‘The tree will have to be cut down then,’

declared Malcolm. 'Nobody could climb up there.'

I could see that the boys half believed Daddy Green's yarn. I had told Louis to fetch along an axe and now set him to work — against his inclination — to cut the dead tree off at the ground. Which way it would fall, if it fell at all, was uncertain, and everybody was sent back to a safe distance, with shooting strictly forbidden; for of all things I dreaded most was having another un-governed fusillade — like that at the old camp when the bear had been caught.

While the Indian was plying the axe, the anxiety of the animal aloft was very evident. Its head alternately appeared and disappeared at the hole, and it often emitted low, fretful sounds. Clearly it had its lair, or burrow, in the tree and was greatly concerned by what was going on below, and by the axe-strokes. The tree proved so much decayed that Louis soon cut it, but the trunk did not fall even then, the top being too firmly fixed in the great hemlock against which it leaned. It became apparent that the latter would also have to be cut — always ticklish business where one large tree hangs on another, since it is not easy to predict just when, or which way, the supporting tree may go. Green ventured up to the hemlock, however, and, taking the axe from Louis, set to work, lumberman fashion, to fell it.

Meanwhile I shepherded the whole party back to what appeared a still safer distance. It was probable that the animal in the hole above would leap out and try to escape when the tree came down; but I dared not permit the boys to stand in a circle round the tree, lest in the excitement of the moment some of them carrying guns might begin firing, and stray shots should fly wild. Finally — President Malcolm aiding — I persuaded them all to draw the cartridges from their guns, for a time, and reload only when given permission. If there is anything in the world more difficult of control than a boy with a gun in the presence of game, I have yet to discover it! Or anything more dangerous to himself and others!

Daddy Green hacked away at the hemlock for ten or fifteen minutes. Louis was then induced to take his turn again. I durst not set the boys to plying the axe, since most of them were wholly inexperienced at cutting scarfs and felling trees. At last, growing impatient with the slow progress made, I laid hold of the axe myself, and I think made a record — from the way the boys applauded! Malcolm also wished to display his muscle; but just then a loud, hollow crack resounded from the beleaguered tree. The dead tree hanging on it stirred perilously.

‘Run, Mally!’ shrilled little Jimmy Knox. Again the tree cracked, then suddenly both trees

came down with a fearful crash which split the hemlock and broke the trunk of the dead tree in four pieces.

I bade Gordon and Lucas load their guns and the others to stand fast in their tracks. But before they could shove in the cartridges, a small black or dark-brown animal dashed out headlong from the hole in the now prostrate tree-trunk, made a few leaps as if to escape, then as suddenly drew itself up, facing us. For an instant it stood at bay, then dashed back into that hole.

A great shout of 'Shoot him!' rose, but the creature was out of sight before either Gordon or Lucas could take aim.

'Close round! Close in on him!' cried Malcolm; but, before a step was taken, out popped the resolute little creature again, this time with something gray in its mouth, and sped away with long, swift bounds. *Bang, bang*, went the two guns; but, apparently untouched, little black-amoor disappeared in the alders of the pond shore.

'By Jingo, that was its young one!' cried Schermerhorn Adams. 'Wasn't that plucky?'

'But I say, we want to get it!' Morris exclaimed; and they all gave chase along the shore and were questing about for some time.

Meanwhile Daddy Green approached the dead tree-trunk to examine the hole. Where the log had split he espied a nest of fine moss inside, and beckoned to me. Ensconced within it were

two gray squirming mites, not larger than rats — the remainder evidently of the brave little beast's litter of young.

'It is a black cat, or fisher, isn't it, Green?' I inquired.

'That 'ere's just what 'tis,' the old man made reply. "'Tain't often you find their nests. You must show it to the boys.' And presently, when they came straggling back from their unsuccessful hunt, we did so, prying the shattered log open to give a better view of the helpless little animals which as yet appeared hardly to have their eyes open.

While we stood peeping in, all the boys, even the dour Louis, crowding around, a startled exclamation from Arthur Fairbanks caused us to turn. That gallant little mother had come back from carrying her kit away to some hiding-place, and dashed forward betwixt us, actually brushing Arthur's legs, to reach her burrow. Under our very eyes, too, as we stood there, she caught up a second of her small family and went bounding off with it, much as with the first one. All the while she was growling softly but threateningly.

The boys stared after her in astonishment, and made no move to load their guns. The same look of admiration was upon each of their faces — the look I was glad to see.

'My, but isn't she a brave one!' Gordon ejaculated.

‘Too bad to hurt her, let her go!’ exclaimed Roscoe. ‘She beats old Hannah Dunston!’

Boys dearly love to hunt and shoot game when off in the woods; but of their own accord, without a suggestion on my part, they all stood back and watched for the little creature’s return, to get her third and last kit. She came as before, after a few minutes, and, facing us an instant in an attitude of defiance, dashed for the last time into her devastated home, grabbed her little one and bounded away.

And that was the last we saw of Daddy Green’s ‘tree-squeak,’ though we heard one on several occasions afterward, when the wind blew.

CHAPTER IX

LOST IN THE WILDERNESS

COOK BUGBEE and Shaddy returned to us from Medway that evening by way of Abol, with such food supplies as could be purchased at the former place with the sixty dollars which I had entrusted to them, namely, thirty pounds of bacon, two sacks of flour, two of corn-meal, beans, pork, sugar, etc., with three bushels of potatoes.

But considered as rations for twenty-two persons, it looked small, and I regretted already not having sent for more.

Bugbee began cooking at once, the boys gathering expectantly around. One couldn't blame them for being hungry; I was hungry myself; but their ardent young appetites filled me with apprehension. I had no idea how much they could eat! What wouldn't I have given for a beef ox, or a large hog! I even had thoughts of breaking the game laws, shooting a couple of deer and paying the fine. I imagine Malcolm noted my concerned face. (There wasn't much that boy didn't notice!) While I was taking account of supplies and storing them in the small tent, I became aware that the boys were holding another pow-wow behind the large tent, one to which the Commissary-General had not even been invited.

That anxious official, therefore, went about his business and thought no more of the slight. I overheard arguments going on for some time out there, but at length the pow-wow dissolved and, shortly after supper, Secretary-of-State Morris Chapman approached and slipping a paper into my hand said, 'Per order of the Katahdin Republic,' then walked away. Amused and somewhat astonished, I retired to the privacy of the old log camp, to see what so much formality was all about. This was what the document contained.

Gold Bond of the Katahdin Republic

Five years from date the holder and owner of this Bond is hereby authorized to collect from the Katahdin Republic the sum of two hundred dollars. Every citizen of the Republic is holden for payment of the same, either one alone or all together. If any have died during the five years, the rest are holden, just the same.

Signed by the President, Supreme Court, Chief Marshal, Deputies, and private citizens.

The signatures followed. They had made it ironclad from their point of view, and of their entire sincerity there could be no doubt. I was both amused and touched. Really they were a pretty fine lot of boys! I was proud of them.

But early next morning, I took the liberty of calling another pow-wow, requesting the attendance of all good citizens.

'Legal difficulties have arisen in the matter of bonding the debt of our new Republic,' I told

them. 'First, none of the citizens are of legal age and hence cannot bind themselves in the manner named in this bond.'

'But some of us will be twenty-one in five years,' Lucas interposed. 'We thought of that.'

'Still, you are not now twenty-one,' I explained. 'And this bond dates from the time it was signed last night.'

The Republic looked puzzled.

'But that need make no difference,' Judge Fairbanks protested. 'Law need not enter into it at all. What we mean is that we will pay it anyhow, law or no law, and I, myself, shall begin at once to save up money to pay off my share.'

'There is still another point to which your Commissary-General feels in honor bound to call attention, the most important one of all with him,' I contended. 'It is this: he offered of his own accord and his own free will to take this party to Katahdin. Hence he is entitled to no reward or payment whatever. It was his own act. Therefore, it must remain a matter of personal honor with him to put it through. You can all see that,' I concluded.

'But, good gracious!' exclaimed Gordon. 'None of us knew how blessed hungry we were going to be, or how much we were going to eat!' — and the others all shouted, 'Yes!'

‘Yet you wouldn’t have me forfeit my sense of honor,’ I urged.

‘But I will tell you what I will consent to do,’ I continued. ‘I will deposit this bond with the Secretary of State, and if ever there comes a time when I am poor and ill and needy, without funds for food or care, I will request you to remember me and help me out.’

The boys laughed. ‘Well, sir, you wouldn’t have to ask twice!’ cried the President. And thus we left it.

Other duties fell to the Commissary-General besides providing food. We grew woefully in need of laundry work. Holes and rips also began to appear in the boys’ clothes. The next day was devoted to washing down by the pond and mending in camp. I had taken the precaution to fetch along a paper of coarse needles and several spools of No. 30 linen thread. Certain of the lads proved ingenious at darning socks and sewing up rips and tears in their garments. Others were quite helpless with needle and thread. Cook Bugbee and myself were obliged to aid these as best we could. Malcolm exhibited both skill and speed as a ‘busheler.’ I never saw a boy work so fast or turn off so many hard jobs in an hour, yet he told me he had never done anything of the sort before. He had also begun to keep an eye on whatever was going amiss and promptly set it right — a little too promptly. Malcolm had the

faults of his good qualities; he was prone to be sudden and peremptory. Presidents should never be hasty or harsh.

In our little self-organized Republic, the boys listened to argument and reason, then consented to do what was proved best; but like all free-born American citizens, they wouldn't be ordered about; they had first to be shown the reason why.

Little Oteri was the only lad of the party who appeared to possess the habit of obedience without question. Rather incautiously I praised him for this, one day, which immediately drew from Gordon the comment that 'Oteri was the subject of a Mikado!'

Shaddy brought four letters for me from Medway as well as several to the boys, but forgot to deliver them till the day following his return. One of mine was from Mrs. Eva Bowen — Charley's mother; the others were from Mrs. Canfield, Mrs. Chapman, and Mrs. Fitzgerald, all begging me for news of their sons' behavior and asking if they had been ill or had been hurt.

I could well understand their anxiety, but was obliged to put off replying for the time being on account of the difficulty of posting letters or sending messages by telegraph. I would have wired at once an 'all right' to each, but we were fifty miles from the nearest station.

And immediately we had actual cause for solicitude.

Shortly after breakfast, next day, the one following 'wash day,' Malcolm approached me with a troubled face. I was collecting scattered supplies at the time, attempting to estimate how long our stock of provisions would last.

'It isn't easy to be President,' Malcolm affirmed dejectedly. 'I think I ought to resign!'

'Nonsense,' I replied. 'You are doing splendidly.'

'No, but I'm not,' Malcolm objected. 'A rebellion has started in camp!'

'What?' I questioned in surprise.

'Yes, sir, rebellion and desertion!'

'Tell me,' I bade him.

'Well, right after breakfast, this morning, Pinkham Stearns and Frank Merritt started up saying they were going to take one of the canoes and go back to Abol on the West Branch and catch a whole lot of trout. They declared they knew the way and could get back by evening. They planned to take their hooks and lines, and fish in that pool where we caught so many when we camped there. They said they could catch enough to last us two or three days and "that would be a great help," they said, "when supplies went so fast."''

'Were they doing it to help out our food?' I questioned.

'Yes, that was what they said. But I think they wanted to go fishing, too. We had great sport there, you know.'

‘I see. And what did you reply to them?’

‘I told them that they mustn’t go off like that without speaking to you about it.’

‘Quite right, Malcolm.’

‘But they’ve gone just the same,’ he explained.

‘Gone?’

‘Yes, we had words about it. They informed me that I had no business to stop them. I insisted that I had. Finally, I got between them and the canoe. They started to push by me and I would have prevented them if I hadn’t already vowed that I wouldn’t do any more fighting on this trip. I promised, you remember, and I mean to keep my word. If I hadn’t promised that, I would have put them out of the canoe so quick they would have known who’s boss here!’

‘I am glad that you have kept your word about fighting, Malcolm,’ I assured him. ‘The President of a Republic should not fight. It is beneath his dignity. But call the Field-Marshal and summon the Supreme Court. We must proceed legally.’

With evident reluctance the Court was convened. It was apparent that there was a difference of opinion and that several of the boys cherished animosity toward the President and were inclined to side with the two rebels who had left camp without permission. It then came out that fully half the boys considered Malcolm too

domineering. The Court complained, too, that it had no law to guide it in making decisions.

‘What we need is a Constitution,’ suggested Chief Justice Arthur Fairbanks. ‘There is nothing for the Court to sit on, nothing to bind us.’

This being the opinion of all three Justices, a pow-wow was held immediately and a committee was delegated to draw a Constitution for the new Republic, and report as soon as possible. It was the sentiment of the majority at the pow-wow, however, that Pinkham and Frank should not have appropriated a ‘Government canoe’ and gone off in it without orders; and Field-Marshal Porter was authorized by vote to take Roscoe Disston as Deputy Marshal, also Shaddy to paddle, and go in pursuit of the offenders. When overhauled they were at once to be placed under arrest and compelled to follow the Marshal back to camp — to be dealt with later.

Malcolm wished to accompany the Marshal, but I succeeded in dissuading him on the grounds that, in time of rebellion and public danger, the President should not leave the capital of the Republic. I was somewhat afraid that trouble might ensue should he overtake the deserters.

As a matter of fact I felt uneasy about the two boys, but hoped that they would be found without much trouble, otherwise I should have gone after them myself. I was sure that they had

intended to go no farther than Abol, for neither of them had taken his gun. Owing to the time spent in discussing the case, they had been gone two hours or more before Porter and Shaddy set off. They therefore could hardly be expected to return before evening, the distance to Abol being near eleven miles. But as no food, or at least very little, had been taken along, I looked for them all to come back by sunset at the latest — with good appetites.

But they failed to appear. Night came on. I grew still more concerned. Many accidents may befall inexperienced persons in so wild a region. At last a canoe was heard crossing the pond. It proved to be Porter with Roscoe and Shaddy, returning, all very tired. They had been to Abol, they told me, but had seen nothing of Pinkham or Frank.

‘I don’t believe they went there,’ Porter said. ‘Their canoe was not at the far end of the pond where they would have left it had they gone to Abol.’

I questioned Shaddy as to tracks on the shore of the pond, or other indications of their having been there, but he had nothing to report.

It was plain now that the boys would be out overnight with neither shelter nor food. Unless something serious had happened to them, I believed they would certainly have made an effort to get back to camp, if for no other reason

than lack of food. A dark cloud looming over Katahdin, with an occasional peal of thunder, added to my anxiety. Showers seemed to be rising. If the boys got wet, what of Frank's croup and Pinkham's earache! I had thoughts of taking Louis and setting off in quest of them. There was no moon, however, and with the gathering clouds the night was a rather dark one. Bugbee believed the boys would turn the canoe over and take shelter beneath it if showers fell. 'Boys fifteen or sixteen years old ought to know enough for that,' he remarked.

We gave up going to look for them until morning and by ten o'clock most of the boys had turned in as usual; but a little later Malcolm came to me saying that he had caught sight more than once of a fire at the far end of the pond; and at once I jumped to the conclusion that Frank and Pinkham had returned there after nightfall, and, not liking to cross over in the dark, had camped for the night.

As it would be bad for them to be without food and exposed to the approaching shower, I called Louis and we launched a canoe, to go and get them. A few drops of rain had begun to fall, but we paddled across in the course of ten minutes. The camp-fire Malcolm had perceived appeared to be back at some little distance from the pond, in the woods. I caught the faint red gleam of it at times as we neared the shore. Not to startle

the boys if they were lying down, we drew up the canoe without hailing them, then went quietly toward the firelight.

It proved to be farther away from the shore than we had at first supposed — a hundred yards or more; but making our way carefully through the spruce growth we presently got near enough to observe how it was located. There looked to be two canoes lying bottom up close beside it and just beyond we could see the dark forms of two persons sitting on the ground, eating and drinking, for we heard a clatter of tin cups and plates.

This could hardly be Pinkham and Frank, I thought, and now cried out, 'Hullo, there!'

Both persons sprang to their feet and turned. By the light of the fire their faces seemed to be those of young men.

I said, 'Good-evening,' then with Louis approached the fire.

I inquired if they had seen anything of two boys with a canoe, while on their way to this place. After a moment's hesitation, one of them answered, 'No.'

I did not wholly like their appearance. Something much more suspicious had also claimed my attention. When the glow of the fire fell on the side of one canoe, I saw a small patch close to the bow exactly like the one I had helped Bugbee place over a little puncture in one of mine, only

a week previously. Otherwise, too, the canoe so resembled my own that I made no doubt as to its identity.

‘Why, this is queer!’ I exclaimed. ‘I see that you have my canoe here. Did you find it adrift? This is the one our two lads set off in!’ — and I turned it over.

‘Wal, you’re mistaken,’ one of the strangers returned. ‘That’s our canoe!’ — and they both took a step toward me; Louis, however, stepped up behind them. I knew that the Indian would fight, if it came to that.

‘This is certainly my canoe,’ I insisted. ‘I can make oath as to that, and I shall take it away.’

‘You can’t prove it’s yours!’ one of them cried.

‘I think I can. If this canoe is mine, the letters, C. A. S., cut with a knife, will be found on the under side of the forward thwart.’ And I pulled up the thwart and turned it over where the fire-light fell on it. There were the three letters very distinct. Louis made an odd noise betwixt his teeth and I saw his hand go to the sheath knife he always carried in his belt. The two campers shrank back a little, looking confused.

‘The truth is this,’ one of them said apologetically. ‘We found this canoe adrift with water in it, at the far end of this pond. We salvaged it and took it to our camp over here. When we got down to Medway, we intended to advertise it.’

I guess it's yours, no doubt,' he added. 'But at first, how could we tell it belonged to you?'

That was plausible, if not convincing. But what distressed me was that they had discovered the canoe adrift with water in it. Could it be that Pinkham and Frank had upset the canoe and been drowned? That, of course, was possible and it would account for their continued absence. I asked the two strangers if they would go with me in the morning and point out the place where they had first seen the canoe adrift. They appeared suspicious of my motives, however, and demurred, saying they would be obliged to make a very early start for Medway.

I now signed to Louis to take up one end of the canoe while I lifted the other, and, keeping an eye to these new acquaintances, we carried it down to the pond shore. There we took it in tow of the other canoe.

'What do you think of those fellows?' I questioned the Indian, as we were paddling back to camp. Louis's reply was laconic. 'Steal canoe. Me look in cuddy. No water been in canoe.' I hoped this was true. Yet there remained the possibility that these would-be canoe thieves had waylaid the boys. Alone as they were and unarmed, they could have made little resistance. Each had a watch and the money for his return journey home from Bangor.

I passed a bad night. Malcolm, Gordon, and

several of the other boys were up and moving about for most of the time.

As soon as we had breakfasted, next morning, I made up four searching parties. With Daddy Green I sent off Herbert, Roscoe, and Schermerhorn Adams, to search the far end of Katahdin Pond where the canoe was alleged to have been found. Louis I sent to Abol, with Malcolm and Porter; and I bade Bugbee cross over where Louis and I had come upon the two campers and, if they had not gone, attempt to learn something further from them. Then, leaving the rest of the boys in camp, I took Shaddy and set off in a boat round the north shore of Katahdin Pond, with the intention of reaching Togue Pond, three miles to the west of us. I thought it possible that the boys might have changed their minds, after starting, and gone there, since we had been informed that very large trout were sometimes captured in this pond.

This solitary sheet of water in the forest was reached after a stiff tramp and we then started to follow round the shore and had proceeded only a few hundred yards when we espied numerous small tracks in the sand, which looked fresh in spite of the showers of the previous evening. Immediately we came upon two slim alder poles that had clearly been used as fishing-rods and, not much farther on, found the dead embers of a little camp-fire. Hard by these lay a tin dipper,

smoked and burned, as if used for boiling water. On the ground near it were scattered the broken shells of numbers of small, speckled eggs which, Shaddy thought, were those of the spruce partridge.

Our inference was that some one had discovered a partridge's nest and afterward kindled a fire and attempted to boil the eggs in that small dipper. Shaddy was quite sure, too, that Pinkham, on setting off, had hung a dipper to his belt, to drink from.

I felt certain now that the missing lads had been at Togue Pond; and we tramped clear round the south shore, shouting at intervals, searching constantly for tracks.

While we were retracing our steps to the place where we had found the dipper, Louis suddenly appeared from the woods, followed after a few minutes by Malcolm and Porter. They had proceeded no farther on their way to Abol than the west end of Katahdin Pond, since at that point Louis had discovered where the canoe which the campers stole had been drawn up, and also the tracks and trail of the two boys through the pine woods toward Togue Pond. Probably no one but an Indian would have been able to follow them; but Louis came out on the shore not far from the spot where Shaddy and I had discovered the alder poles; and his first words to me were,

‘Boys no go Abol at all. Come here catch fish.’ He examined the dipper and eggshells with whimsical interest, wrinkling his nose in a queer way. ‘Boys hungry,’ he remarked, adding, ‘Me seeum killiwis’ (partridge) ‘nest back in woods. Eggs all gone’ — and Louis actually laughed — a most unusual indulgence on his part.

But I was far from amused. If the boys had been at Togue Pond the previous afternoon, why had they not returned to camp the same night? The distance was no more than three miles and with Katahdin looming loftily in the north, they ought easily to have found their way back to us.

Apparently something had happened to them and I felt quite as much concerned as ever.

Louis now began questing around of his own accord, looking for traces or a trail; but the growth hereabouts was a mixed one, not so favorable for tracking as the carpet of brown needles in pine forests. Malcolm and Porter went racing to and fro in imitation of the Indian.

Not far away in the woods, however, Shaddy had stumbled upon a plot of dry sedges crushed flat, looking as if some one had been lying there; and hard by he picked up two pocket handkerchiefs much soiled and tied in knots.

I was certain now that Pinkham and Frank had been in trouble of some sort, and at once set our whole party coursing about on all sides.

This had gone on but a few minutes when Mal-

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colm came running to me, looking pale and frightened. 'I've found Frank!' he whispered. 'I'm afraid he is dead!'

'Where?' I demanded, and hastily followed Malcolm, who had turned to hurry back. We came immediately to a slight shelter of branches and boughs beside a large rock, and partly hidden beside it lay Frank outstretched and fearfully disheveled.

Malcolm was at my side. 'I didn't move him,' he explained. 'I didn't touch him, he looked so strange. Oh, is he dead?'

I could see at once that the boy was breathing lightly, but naturally; in short, that he was asleep, though his face looked swollen and his body seemed bloated. I shook him gently until his eyes opened.

'Wake up, Frank! Tell me what has happened,' I urged.

He opened his eyes and stared at me without attempting to stir for some moments. He appeared lethargic or comatose.

'Get up and tell me where Pinkham has gone,' I bade him. 'Did you get hurt at the pond? Rouse up and explain how you happened to go to Togue Pond.'

Malcolm and I then took him by the arms and at length raised him to his feet. He was loath to step, but we finally induced him to walk between us. Shaddy, Louis, and Porter had now joined us.

Walking seemed to rouse the lad to fuller consciousness, and at last he told us that Pinkham, after spending the night with him, had gone, he thought, back to our camp on Katahdin Pond. Bit by bit he related how they had fallen in with two stray campers, the previous morning, who said that they had just come from Abol and that the river pools there had been 'fished out' recently by a party of sportsmen. Believing this report, the boys had decided to leave their canoe at the far end of Katahdin Pond and go on to Togue Pond. It was this change of plan which had afforded the two vagrant campers opportunity to steal the canoe.

Meantime we were moving slowly forward toward our home camp — Malcolm and I still supporting Frank — and not much later met Pinkham and Daddy Green with all the other boys, approaching at a great pace through the forest; and it was from Pinkham, rather than Frank, that we learned the episode of the partridge eggs.

They had taken only two 'pilot biscuits' each, by way of provisions for their fishing trip; and, after angling for two hours or more at Togue Pond without success, they began to feel the need of food. It was then that Frank had proposed boiling the eggs, and after kindling a fire they had done this, three at a time, in the dipper. There were eleven of the eggs. Pinkham did not

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like the taste of them and would not touch them after the first mouthful. But Frank declared they were good and ate seven or eight.

Half an hour later as they were about leaving the pond, Frank was taken with cramps so violently that he cried out and rolled on the sand. Pinkham was unaffected and for a long time tried to persuade Frank to return with him where they had left the canoe. But the lad was now too ill to rise or walk; he continued crying out from pain and rolled about spasmodically. Once he managed to get to his feet and they proceeded a few steps through the woods; but immediately Frank became much worse again and well-nigh helpless, his whole body being covered with livid red wheals. It is likely that the eggs were old and had induced ptomaine poisoning.

Pinkham was badly frightened, for evening was drawing on and shower clouds darkened the sky. Just as dusk fell he built the little shelter where we had found Frank, and there they had passed a terrible night.

Not till toward morning did the suffering lad cease to writhe and cry out. At last he grew a little easier, appeared to become torpid, and finally fell asleep. Pinkham watched beside him and may have slept a little himself; but not long after sunrise he roused and, perceiving that Frank was still sleeping, set off for camp to summon help, as above mentioned.



Frank was now able to walk. His ailment was subsiding; and I judged that he needed nothing more than a purgative. For a day or two he remained weak and unsteady on his feet; but I could only be thankful that the escapade had ended without more serious consequences.

Later in the day the boys held pow-wow number six, and voted unanimously that no one hereafter should leave the camp on any pretext, to go farther than one mile, without permission from the Supreme Court, the President, Field-Marshal, or Commissary-General! They had had their lesson.

The remainder of the day was devoted to recuperation from our anxieties. That night I must have slept soundly, for Herbert got up in his sleep and left my side without waking me. I imagine that the excitement over the attempt to steal our canoe may have started him off in somnambulism again. It was Louis who at length heard him down on the pond shore, jabbering savagely to himself. Apparently he believed he was attacking canoe thieves, for he carried one of the guns — fortunately unloaded.

## CHAPTER X

### THE BEAR IN THE HEMLOCK

IN the midst of the preoccupations of the last two days, something in a gunny sack that Bugbee had brought back with the supplies had passed unnoticed, but now was discovered by little Jimmy Knox and became at once the cause of much excitement — it being nothing less than a new and very up-to-date bear-trap. Bugbee had thought it would please the boys to trap another bear, but had said nothing to me about it, having feared that I might not approve of further efforts after our previous adventure.

As a matter of fact, I did feel disturbed at first by the prospect the trap opened; but after the boys had seen that trap there was, of course, no withstanding the demand to have it set; and nearly all of them started out with Bugbee and the trap, shortly before sunset that afternoon.

About a mile to the east of the second of the Katahdin ponds there was an old *brûlée*, or burnt track, where blueberries now abounded. Bugbee was well acquainted with the place and knew that at this time of year bears were wont to gather there for the berries, also that on their journeyings they usually followed certain paths in the forest. It was in one of these old trails up from

the lowlands, at the easterly end of the ponds, that he and the boys set the trap.

I did not myself accompany this latter expedition, being much occupied, with Daddy Green, putting another bean-hole in operation. During the day, too, Shaddy had shot a couple of porcupines, and the boys were very desirous of having Louis bake them, Indian fashion, without being skinned. Any device that would provide provisions was of interest to me. I constantly worried, nights, about supplies, and half a dozen times resolved in desperation to take the party directly home. It is no light matter to provide three meals a day for twenty hungry persons, particularly when your base of supplies is fifty miles away. I shuddered as to what might happen if any of my calculations as to food went wrong. The margins I allowed from day to day invariably fell short; and the deficits that occurred put me in daily panic. Malcolm came to share these anxieties; but most of the lads were as thoughtless as young pigs and about equally ravenous! But for these worries about food, I should really have had a pretty good time myself.

After a while I kept Louis fishing a good part of the time. Now and again he would fish diligently, but oftener he would not attempt to catch anything.

Shaddy's porcupines proved so palatable and popular that I sent him out hunting for more

during two days thereafter; and on the second day he went over to the *brûlée* accompanied by Porter, Brooks, and four or five of the others, carrying buckets to fill with blueberries.

An hour or so later they all appeared hot-foot and shouting, Shaddy close behind them; they had got no porcupines and no berries and had even lost their buckets. But Porter was yelling that the bear-trap was gone and the 'clog' with it.

'There's one caught!' he cried. 'Sure thing! We saw where he ran off and smashed down the bushes. I bet he's a big one!' — and Brooks was shouting, 'Come on, fellows! Get your guns quick and come on!'

No army ever responded to the long roll more swiftly. Every boy was afoot in half a minute, and every one who had brought a gun to camp had it in hand. I despaired of issuing a counter-manding order. The idea of going bear-hunting without a gun was plainly absurd. I barely got in a request to have all guns unloaded till an order to load should be given. Louis had roused up from one of his aboriginal reveries and appeared with his Winchester and a gleam in his dull-black eyes. Bugbee, too, had hastily banked his cooking fire and, seizing the camp axe, joined the rush. The camp was left wholly unguarded, for Daddy Green came pounding after us, and Shaddy was already ahead leading the foray.



I knew at once that we were in for the biggest thing yet, and that in order to preserve even a semblance of safety my work was cut out for me.

‘Malcolm, for Heaven’s sake, help me keep them from shooting themselves or each other, if you can,’ I implored, as we all streamed on through the forest in the direction of the *brûlée*. ‘If we do see a bear, get them in line, if you can, and don’t let them go to firing in a bunch with some ahead of the others!’

‘Yes, sir, I’ll do it,’ he agreed.

‘I rely on you, Malcolm,’ I assured him. ‘You are President, you know,’ I reminded him.

‘Yes, sir!’ panted Malcolm as we rushed on.

It was a hot afternoon — the temperature, I mean — and we all were perspiring freely when the place, in a thick clump of swamp maples where the trap had been set, was finally reached. Bugbee looked about. There was no doubt that some animal had been caught and had run off, dragging the clog — a section of green spruce log about six feet in length. The merest novice could have followed the trail. Moss had been gouged up, dry brush broken to bits, and green bushes crushed down. The pursuit began instantly, Bugbee and I cautioning the on-rushing horde to keep a sharp eye ahead lest they come upon an irate bear too suddenly. Black bears nowadays usually run from mankind as fast as their legs

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permit; but a bear held fast by his toes in a trap, with the clog caught betwixt two trees, might naturally entertain different sentiments toward his pursuers. Besides, it was quite possible that a lucivee had sprung the trap, instead of a bear, in which case equal or greater caution was needful, since one of those large cats, when in a trap, is quite likely to meet a pursuer more than half-way, with a swift, long jump, trap and all.

It was soon apparent, however, that the fugitive in the trap was a bear. Where the trail led through a little swamp the tracks in the mire were unmistakably ursine, not a little resembling those of a human foot. They were big tracks and the excitement of the youthful hunters visibly increased. Morris and Schermerhorn now asked permission to load their guns, but this request President Malcolm sternly refused.

‘Obey orders!’ he cried. ‘No loading till the order comes!’

Through this swamp, too, there were no marks of the heavy clog, a circumstance which Bugbee explained by saying that to ease the drag of the clog on his foot the bear had taken it up in his mouth.

Apparently the animal had borne the log in this manner for at least two hundred yards. As it was not less than six inches in diameter and would have weighed forty or fifty pounds, several of the younger lads looked a trifle concerned and

were observed to fall somewhat in the rear of the others.

‘Now, he must have an awful mouth!’ I overheard Jimmy exclaim to Montrose Whitten.

The pursuit proved long and difficult. Clear Stream was reached and then we followed the course of that large mountain brook round the east flank of Katahdin for several miles, passing the southerly border of the blueberry *brûlée*. Bugbee grew uneasy over taking the boys so far from camp at so late an hour, and was also a little concerned, I think, as to what might become of his new trap.

The bear appeared to be heading straight for the wilds of Aroostook County. Judging from the distance apart of the tracks which we came upon at times, the animal was proceeding rapidly in spite of the impediment of the clog.

Finally I called a halt. The sun had set and the gloom of evening was deepening in that lofty, dank old forest. Making the best time possible, two hours would be required for our return to camp. But Louis was somewhere ahead trailing the bear. Bugbee *so-ho*-ed to him several times and we waited, knowing it would not be the Indian’s way to answer. But at last he came walking silently through the woods toward us, and Daddy Green finally got from him that he had lost the trail. Beyond a certain point on the brook bank he had been unable to discover

any further traces, tracks, or marks of the trap.

‘Look all round. No findum,’ he said.

This seemed rather strange, since thus far the marks of the clog could be followed by any one without hesitation. But with night at hand I concluded, since Louis had lost the trail, we all might as well return to camp at once.

The tramp back proved a tiresome one, especially for the younger lads, for we took a more direct route to Katahdin Pond, to avoid détours, and in consequence became involved in bogs and thickets where, owing to the darkness, there were scratched faces and many badly mired feet.

Next morning, however, most of the boys were resolute as ever to resume the chase after the trapped bear; but I persuaded little Jimmy, Giartsu Oteri, and Frank Merritt to remain in camp and shoot jays with their bows, Frank not yet having fully recovered from his misadventure at Togue Pond. I also prevailed on Daddy Green to stay behind in charge of the camp.

By eight o’clock the hunt again set forth, Louis and Shaddy leading the way and the boys streaming after them. Less than a mile out of camp they nearly ran into an old cow moose which Charley Bowen was on the point of shooting despite all orders to the contrary. Accidentally — so he claimed — he was running through the woods close on Shaddy’s heels with his gun



loaded! The incident made me doubly uneasy; I feared that others of the party could not be relied on if we really came up with the bear. Malcolm, however, called a halt and made a personal inspection of every gun. Charley's proved to be the only one with a cartridge in it.

On rushed the hunt again; and in the course of an hour and a half we reached the clump of big hemlocks on Clear Stream where Louis had lost the trail the previous evening. Just here every trace and track ceased; and though we looked diligently on all sides for half a mile, and even crossed the deep brook and examined both banks, not a mark in moss or mud could be detected.

'Him fly away,' Louis explained.

Probably we glanced up the trees and looked at the bark on the trunks, though I do not remember exactly as to this. But at any rate, after lingering about for at least an hour, we abandoned the hunt and started to go away, wholly baffled, when the most unearthly yell, howl, or raucous bawl I ever heard broke the quiet of the forest and reëchoed from the lofty walls of Katahdin a mile distant!

It made us all jump, and some of the boys actually cried out from terror. It was the more startling since it seemed to come from directly over our heads. The outcry was followed by visible signs of a violent struggle far up in one of

those large hemlocks, out of sight, among the thick shaggy boughs and branches. The trap and chain, too, were heard clanking loudly.

Naturally there was a rapid scattering from under that tree, for the bear was evidently up there and, judging from the crashing of limbs, he was on his way down.

Gaining a little distance and various vantage-points where it was possible to look into the upper portion of the dense green treetop, it was seen that the bear was hanging head downward, suspended by one leg and the trap chain. Plainly he had first climbed much higher, hauling the clog after him, but later, on attempting to descend, either the trap or clog had caught betwixt two limbs and had hung him up. He had got up there, but couldn't get down, and had probably been hanging there all night; and if the animal had been wise enough to keep still, I rather think we should have gone away without discovering his whereabouts. But the pinch of the trap jaws gave him perhaps so much pain that he couldn't keep still any longer. Hence the hideous salute with which he greeted his tormentors.

The way Bugbee accounted for the bear's predicament was that it had been making off with the trap, the previous afternoon, and heard us coming in pursuit. (That would have not been difficult, since anything with ears could have

heard us a mile off!) Bugbee thought that, growing tired of dragging the clog and to escape his pursuers, the animal had climbed the hemlock and had gone far into the top. He was already there when Louis came up at dusk and had lost the trail at that place. Later in the night he probably tried to come down and continue his flight, but got hung in the attempt.

The spot where we saw him hanging was, I should say, forty feet from the ground; and, as he struggled violently at intervals, it was quite possible that he might break loose and fall to earth at any moment! In fact, if he had dropped among us when we first heard that yell of his, I don't know what would have happened!

But he failed to get free, and now the shouting from a dozen throats defied all description. Cartridges went in, regardless of permission. Malcolm attempted valiantly to form a line at some distance from the hemlock, and station the boys two paces apart, bidding each hold his fire till orders came. But every fresh struggle aloft brought all regulations to naught.

'Let's fire!'

'Let's fire!'

'Shoot him before he comes down!'

'Shoot before he gets away!'

Half the boys were yelling at the same time. Bugbee prudently retired to the rear of the firing-line; Shaddy and I believed it not unwise

to follow his example. Louis went skulking across the stream. The space between Malcolm's wildly vociferous line of gunmen and the hemlock was manifestly a danger zone.

But hurrying up from the rear, I now advised letting Louis do the shooting, and kill the poor bear mercifully with his carbine. Before I could obtain a hearing, however, Schermerhorn Adams fired, and then every boy with a gun let drive. Instantly every object was dim from smoke. We heard the bear yelp. Some of them must have hit him. The shouting was indescribable, and there stood Malcolm in front, nearly invisible in the powder-smoke, making heroic efforts to keep the boys in line. At times, above the din, I could hear his authoritative orders:

'Keep back there, Morris! Keep back! Stand where you are, Arthur! Don't run up, Charley! Keep that gun-barrel pointing down, Roscoe, while you load. Oh, Porter! You crazy chump! Don't stick that gun-barrel in my face! Take care, Herbert, your gun is at full cock! Look out, Montrose! See where you are aiming! Get calm, Lucas, and stop hopping round.'

Then *bang, bang*, went a dozen guns again. The bear yelled horribly this time. Bits of boughs dropped from the hemlocks. But smoke again enveloped everything. Once more I stole up and endeavored to make a diversion.

'Don't torture that poor brute with shot!' I



urged. 'Let Louis kill him with a bullet. Think how he has been suffering there, head down!'

But I might as well have talked to the wind.

I was much afraid Malcolm might be shot accidentally, and called several times to him not to stand directly in front of the others. One gun, if not two, had gone off prematurely. But Malcolm had set himself to keep the boys in line and his determined character would brook no violation of his orders. He kept an eye to all of them; and some of his epithets were remarked by the recipients and rankled afterward. As much as a week later I overheard Porter telling Malcolm never to call him 'a crazy chump' again! To which Malcolm promptly replied, 'Then don't be one!'

'Yes, and he called me a "lunatic"! ' Charley Bowen grumbled.

'Well, Charley, I meant temporarily only,' Malcolm apologized. 'I was a little crazy, myself.' Epithets make bad memories.

They each got in four or five shots, I think, at that unhappy creature. It was not easy to stop the fusillade once it had started. I had to let the frenzy to shoot something expend itself. Smelling so much powder-smoke, too, was very exciting, at least old soldiers have so declared. As long as the bear snarled, growled, and kicked, shots kept cracking at him. In the midst of the uproar, however, I heard Louis's carbine speak from

across the brook, and I imagine it was this bullet that finished the wretched beast off. I heard nothing more from him and presently discerned that he was hanging limp by the trap chain.

The jubilant victors drew near, cautiously at first, then uproariously.

‘He’s dead enough now!’ Gordon cried. ‘And I bet his old hide is well packed with shot!’ — as indeed proved to be the case afterward. In fact the skin was ruined as a trophy, and so many of the pellets had penetrated the flesh beneath it that several of the boys were near breaking their teeth on them when the meat was cooked later.

The hemlock had to be felled to get the carcass down. Bugbee had brought his axe and now addressed himself to the task, Shaddy relieving him at intervals, till, after fifteen or twenty minutes, tree, bear, trap, and clog came down with a tremendous crash. A momentary panic followed, for when the bear’s body struck the earth it rebounded as if the animal were regaining consciousness, and there was a rapid scattering to a safer distance with a hurried recourse to firearms.

But it proved a false alarm. The animal was dead. Bugbee removed the trap from its leg, which was worn deeply to the bone and tendons; and it was the sight of that lacerated leg that drew from Lucas and Herbert the first exclamation of pity I had yet heard from my youthful nimrods.

That night after we had retired and Herbert was lying near me — as usual — he turned over just as he was drowsing off and whispered,

‘I do think it is a shame to set traps for wild animals!’

‘Yes, Herbert,’ I whispered back, ‘it is and you and I will both remember that all our lives!’

‘I’m going to,’ he agreed, and fell asleep.

For my part, too, I was thanking all the local deities that have their habitat about Katahdin that nobody had got hurt — but the bear!

Immediately, and even before Louis had finished skinning our quarry that day, the boys were coaxing Bugbee to set his trap again. Nor could I deny that the bear’s flesh was a windfall to me from a commissary’s point of view. The creature was fat and would have weighed, Bugbee believed, very near three hundred pounds. Daddy Green, Shaddy, and Louis had to make two trips before it could all be transported to camp and hung on the meat pole. Even during warm weather, fresh meat, in that clear, pure air of Katahdin, will keep for a week without salt. In a city or village it would spoil in two days.

Bugbee was slow in promising to set the trap again, casting numerous covert glances at me to which I responded with equally covert negative shakes of the head. Next morning, however, the boys so mightily renewed their importunities and followed Bugbee around so closely that I

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finally gave in to them. But I was gratified to observe that Herbert had kept a little apart, and had not added his voice to the public clamor. Lucas, too, had looked a little sheepish about it.



## CHAPTER XI

### LYNX KITTENS

A GREAT deal of bear meat is doubtless bad for youthful stomachs, as is too much meat of any kind.

Roscoe was ill next morning and could eat no breakfast. I treated him in the usual manner and afterward gave him two dipperfuls of water as hot as he could drink, my rather crude idea being at that time to rinse him out — for a fresh start.

It was evident that the boys were eating too much wild meat, and I was not a little perplexed about their diet. But what to do? Wild flesh was the food easiest procured, bread, puddings, or vegetables, the most difficult. If only they had not eaten so ravenously, the matter might have been better regulated; but it seemed as though they were hungry all the time.

That morning I sent all but Roscoe and the little Jap, blueberrying again, to the *brûlée*, with every spare bucket, dish, and kettle in camp. Bugbee went along too to set his bear-trap.

After the uproar of their departure had subsided and quiet settled on the place, I once more took stock of our provisions. Apprehensively I figured all the items. It was clear that more supplies must be got within four days at the

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latest and I decided to send at once to Medway again.

I had sent Louis out fishing, but a shower rose over Katahdin and he returned, saying that fish would not bite when it thundered.

Thunder it did appallingly, and we had barely time to throw a tarpaulin over the meat pole before there came such a downpour as is seldom witnessed; and this was followed by another equally heavy. I knew that the boys would be drenched and sent Louis to hasten their return to camp and dry garments. He discovered them, with Bugbee, partly sheltered under a clump of large hemlocks, but in a somewhat awed and dazed condition on account of a thunderbolt which had struck a near-by tree, stripping and shattering it almost beyond belief. The tree was literally demolished; and the detonation had been so tremendous that the boys were unable to hear each other's voices for some moments thereafter. They reached camp very wet and much of the afternoon was devoted to drying their clothes.

Meantime Bugbee and Daddy Green had set off with two canoes for another supply of provisions — fifty dollars' worth. This time I sent for a hundred pounds of corn-meal and twenty pounds of brown sugar, having in mind to feed my young army partially on corn-meal, for dietetic reasons, to offset the effect of so much

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fried meat. I also ordered three bushels of potatoes.

Malcolm had a better realization of the expenses of our outing than many of the other boys, and he came to me that evening with a thoughtful but amusing proposition, to have the Katahdin Republic issue ten more 'gold bonds' of fifty dollars each, payable on the first day of January following — as capital for carrying on the expedition.

Malcolm, whose father is a broker, had acquired considerable knowledge of the manner in which desirable enterprises are carried on, by securing funds on the bonding plan.

He had no doubt, he affirmed, that the Republic was solvent and would ultimately pay all its honest debts! The present food situation worried him, however. I was able to reassure him on that subject; but afterward he told me of other troubles that were harassing him. Morris, Arthur, and Montrose Whitten were plotting to depose him as President, and elect Galbraith in his place. He informed me, too, that Schermerhorn Adams had recently advised him to resign.

'Goodness knows I'm ready to do so,' Malcolm exclaimed. 'Being President is the hardest, most thankless job I ever undertook! I believe every boy in our party wants to be President, except Jimmy and little Giartsu. Let 'em, I say! I'm

willing,' Malcolm asserted. 'But I thought I would ask you about resigning,' he added.

I dissuaded him. Malcolm possessed the most executive ability of any boy in the party, his only fault being a too authoritative manner. Again I cautioned him good-humoredly as to that.

'Yes, I'm trying to hold in,' he assured me. 'I try to be meek as Moses with them!'

But meekness did not come easy to Malcolm. That some of the boys wanted him to resign rankled like a poisoned arrow in his heart.

'I would just like to have that Lucas Galbraith President for one week!' he suddenly exclaimed, a little later. 'Wouldn't I make his life a burden to him!'

'But, Malcolm,' I objected, 'I'm afraid it isn't the part of a good citizen to embarrass the office-holders wilfully.'

'No, I suppose it isn't,' he admitted candidly. 'Well, I thank you for advising me. I'll serve the Republic awhile longer and do the best I can. If they vote me out, I shall not mind it much. You don't, when you've done your best, do you?' he added, a little wistfully, I thought.

Again more duties in the kitchen fell to the lot of the Commissary-General, in the absence of Cook Bugbee. Shaddy provided me with fuel, then dug and burned a bean-hole. Malcolm, of his own accord, set himself to fry four spiderfuls of bear meat. Herbert picked over and set out



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blueberries for our evening meal, while I baked two sheetfuls of corn-cake with blueberries in it. One sheetful was burned rather badly on the bottom; but the boys charitably applauded when it was turned over and the black crust revealed itself.

The moon shone dimly over the still dripping forest; and not to be obliged to prepare breakfast next morning with wet wood, I sent Shaddy out after supper to fetch in several armfuls to dry over the embers of our fire. The great pitch-pine log to which we had made resort for fuel during several days since we had come there was exhausted; and Shaddy went off to a blow-down a hundred yards or more away, where a number of dry fallen spruces lay criss-cross amongst great rocks.

He had taken an axe along and now set himself to trim one or more of the dead trees, knocking off the branches with the poll of the axe. This made quite a loud crackling, heard on the still evening air as far off as the camp. Above the noise he was himself making, Shaddy suddenly heard a snort behind him. Facing round with a jump, he saw a huge bull moose not five yards distant, shaking its antlers at him, as if offering battle.

Shaddy was badly frightened. Uttering a yell he flung his axe at the animal and ran for camp at top speed, shouting,

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'Get your guns! There's a moose after me! Get your guns, quick!'

Bursting in at the door of the log camp where I sat, attempting to sew up a long slit in Herbert's jacket sleeve, Shaddy actually leaped behind me, crying,

'He's coming — the awfulest big moose you ever saw!'

I ran outside, but saw no moose; and I do not think that the big animal had really followed Shaddy. Probably it had heard him breaking off the dry branches and mistook the noise for that made by another moose, 'challenging' it to combat — and so had rushed forward through the forest, from a distance away.

In their tent near by, Montrose and Lucas had heard Shaddy's cries and turned out, gun in hand. They, too, saw nothing of the sylvan apparition; but a few moments afterward, Herbert came to tell me that he had seen Louis steal forth from the guides' tent, with his carbine. I therefore began shouting the Indian's name and made the woods resound, hallooing to him not to shoot the moose.

Less than five minutes later, however, we heard the report of his carbine, and I was in a state of lively alarm lest my ungovernable hireling had rendered me liable to pay a fine of a hundred dollars!

But after half an hour, Louis came back, and

when I inquired what he had been doing, replied merely, 'S'pose I no hittum!'

As the fellow rarely missed anything he shot at, what I had to fear, during the following week or two, was that he had fatally wounded a moose and that the wardens would chance upon the animal and take steps to learn by whom the law had been broken.

While cooking mush for breakfast next morning, Malcolm reminded me of the bear-trap that Bugbee had set before he had gone for supplies.

'He told me it must be looked to every day,' Malcolm explained. Owing to my absorption with the cooking, I had forgotten the trap. At that moment I was engaged with concocting a great Irish stew in two kettles, for the midday meal. It consisted of bear's meat, potatoes, and 'dumplings' of my own make. It was a dish I dared not leave to Shaddy, and I dared not let all the boys go off together, with their guns. If possibly another bear had been trapped, there was no saying what might happen. I therefore temporized by delegating Malcolm, Gordon, Porter, and Charley Bowen to visit the trap, taking along one gun only. Louis I had already sent out fishing again, chiefly to keep him occupied and away from that far-too-deadly carbine of his!

There was grumbling from the other boys at being kept in camp, and I promised them that, if

anything should be found in the trap, I would let them join in the chase. Devoutly I hoped that no more bears would be trapped. Bear hunts were fraught with perils.

I now went on with the stew and covered in the bean-hole, to keep hot till evening. As cook and commissary combined, I was learning to plan two meals ahead — meals came with such distracting frequency!

An hour or more passed, the boys in camp being occupied with carving a large totem pole for the front of their tent. Suddenly wild halloos were heard. Immediately Porter and Gordon appeared, out of breath from running, and shouting that the trap and clog were gone again. Malcolm had sent them to summon me and was himself following the trail with Charley.

Wild hurrahs arose from the camp and, knowing from past experience that nothing could be done to prevent the chase, I hastily placed Shaddy in charge of the stew — bidding him keep up the fire and let it boil slowly one hour longer — and headed the rout for the *brûlée* myself. This time every boy went and every gun, axe, and knife was taken along.

The two or three miles to the *brûlée* were covered in record time, and we met Malcolm and Gordon coming in our direction. They had followed the trail of the trap and clog for some distance up toward the foot of Katahdin, but fear-

ing that we might not find them had turned back.

‘Malcolm, what is it? What’s caught?’ I questioned.

‘Well,’ he replied quizzically, ‘it may be a bear, but it doesn’t smell like one! It smells more like cats.’ The boys were growing adept in the odor of bears!

I inquired if Bugbee had used the same clog as before.

‘No,’ Porter answered. ‘Herbert wanted him to use a lighter one which he thought wouldn’t be so cruel. Bugbee laughed, but he hitched the trap chain to a light one.’

We followed the trail up through the *brûlée* for half a mile or more. The blueberries grew so plentifully all the way that the trap and clog had literally torn off bushels of them. Great, smutty, half-consumed logs, the trunks of trees killed by forest fires, lay all about. We were obliged to climb over these, and rather incautiously Lucas, who was leading the chase at a little distance ahead, jumped upon one of them which lay waist-high across several others. Before he could leap down on the other side, however, he was fairly knocked off the log backwards by a bristling gray animal that sprang at him with a spit and a growl. The creature had risen from behind another log and, but for the trap and clog catching on this, Lucas would have been in for a



A BRISTLING GRAY ANIMAL THAT SPRANG AT HIM WITH
A SPIT AND A GROWL

scratching if nothing worse. He scrambled to his feet with a yell of alarm, and there was the wild cat not six feet away struggling to get loose and attack him!

I laid hold of Gordon's gun, but could not fire until he had given me a cartridge and before this was accomplished the big cat, terrorized by the outcries, turned back and, wrenching itself free, ran off up the *brûlée* bounding high over the logs, jerking trap and clog after it. This adventure had, I think, been a useful lesson to the boys as to the necessity of following cautiously on the trail of trapped animals.

This animal was evidently a lynx and a large one. The rapidity with which it fled and the long leaps it took were amazing considering the size and weight of the trap and clog it was dragging. Gordon attempted to measure some of the bounds the beast made over logs and rocks. Although hampered and impeded, as the animal must have been, it cleared without doubt ten or twelve feet at many of its leaps.

Since wild cats when trapped rarely run very far at once, we still continued to follow in its wake; but it was a very wary and watchful party of young hunters that had taken up the pursuit after Lucas's experience.

Up near where the first crags of the mountain rise abruptly, we came presently to a gloomy recess, overhung by high rocks, where the trail

indicated that the lynx had entered and drawn the trap after it. How far back it had retreated was not easily ascertained. Standing at a safe distance, the boys hurled stones and fired a number of shots into the dark opening, but failed to drive the creature out. We wished to salvage Bugbee's new bear-trap, if possible, but no one wished to crawl into that dismal hole; and, as dark clouds were now gathering over the mountain with indications of another downpour, I hurried the party home to camp, not wishing to be up all night drying their clothes.

But next morning we all returned to the den carrying a boathook affixed to a long pole, Louis having avowed an intention of hauling the lynx out with it. The boys were in great glee, with high expectation of a spectacular scene when the Indian should put his project into execution.

In my present state of feelings toward Louis, I was quite ready to see the Indian try it. So were the boys. They also wanted to recover Bugbee's trap, partly from affection for Buggy, who was popular with them, and partly because they wished to have the trap set again.

We followed along by the foot of the mountain through a sparse growth of slender pines, and, on approaching the vicinity of the place where the lynx had taken to its lair, I halted the party and sent the Indian forward to reconnoiter. I thought the cat might have come out and made efforts to

free itself from its painful impediment. Louis was gone for some time, but finally returned, grinning broadly.

‘Littlum cats,’ he explained, and held up two fingers, then made signs for us to follow. We stole along behind him for a hundred or more yards, making as little noise as possible, and came at length to a vantage-point among rocks and high-bush blueberry shrubs where the entrance to the den could be discerned — and there sure enough were two lynx kittens, rolling over at play with each other in the sunshine. They were still small, not larger than half-grown house cats, mere tiny bob-tailed balls of fur, with big heads and long clumsy legs.

The boys watched them delightedly. Apparently this was the home lair. The lynx that we had trapped the previous day was doubtless a female and this was her young family. We lay quietly for some time thinking the mother cat might come out in sight, for we supposed that she was lying up in the den with the trap on her leg. Presently, however, the trap chain was heard clanking at a distance in the *brûlée*. The sounds approached and by and by the old lynx appeared, dragging the trap and clog behind her; and, as she came nearer to the kits, we perceived that she carried something in her mouth — a spruce partridge. Plainly this was for her young. Tormented as she must have been by the cruel grip

of the trap on her leg, this wild mother had yet sallied forth to hunt for her little ones.

I glanced at the boys. They were all looking at me.

‘Isn’t that pitiful?’ Malcolm whispered.

‘I call it a shame,’ muttered Herbert.

We continued watching intently what was going on. But for that trap it would have been a pretty scene. Seeing their dam coming and hearing her low smothered call, both kits had dashed to meet her and with tooth and nail fell upon the partridge which she laid down before them. They laid hold of it, growled, pulled it away from each other, then played and stalked it, retiring a few steps, then springing upon it savagely. Meantime the mother lynx had lain down wearily and licked that painful hind leg.

It was evident the kits were too young yet really to rend and devour the bird, for, after playing awhile with it, they ran to her manifestly seeking other nourishment; and yielding to their importunities the mother stretched herself in the sunshine and allowed them to nurse.

Suddenly, however, she sprang to her feet and glared about. I suppose that some whiff of our odor had reached her, although we were well concealed by bushes and not less than two hundred feet distant. For some time she continued to look this way and that, then, as if in response to a low note in her throat, the kits sped back to the

shelter of their lair. The mother lynx continued to look around as if uncertain whether to trust the evidence of her nose. Or possibly she had heard some stir we had made in the bushes, or even the click of Louis's carbine, for while we still lay quietly watching, he suddenly fired and shot her dead as she stood there.

'Oh, you brute! How could you do that?' little Jimmy cried impulsively; yet I could but feel that Louis had done the wisest thing possible under the circumstances. To have removed the trap from the animal's leg while living would have been a difficult matter. Nor would it have been humane to let it remain there indefinitely. Then, too, the boys wished to recover the trap.

And again we witnessed the cruel ravages of the trap jaws which had worn clean to the bone and sinews of the lynx's leg. It was one of those situations which necessarily occur when animals are caught in steel traps.

I questioned the boys anew as to what they thought of it; and fresh from observing that which had just taken place, every lad of them voted it an inexcusably cruel method.

But the question that then arose was what to do about those lynx kittens in the den under the rocks.

'Will they starve and die if we leave them there?' Herbert demanded. This appeared quite likely, or that, otherwise, deprived as they now

were of their mother's guardian care, some prowler of the wilds would enter the lair and throttle them. I asked Louis if he thought they could be captured. He showed his strong white teeth in an engaging grin.

'Me go gettum,' he offered, and, taking off his canvas jacket, got down on all fours and crawled into the noisome hole without the slightest hesitation. Immediately we heard sounds of spitting and yawling which caused the boys to open their eyes widely. Louis had come upon the kits at once; the cavity was not an extensive one; but the little creatures resisted fiercely.

'Won't they bite him?' little Jimmy exclaimed hopefully; his sympathies were still on the side of the lynx family.

Louis emerged, still grinning, with one of the kits swaddled in his jacket. The tiny thing scratched, bit, spit, and squalled all at once. It was quite frantic from fear or native ferocity; and, while attempting to transfer it from the Indian's jacket to my own, it escaped, ran into the *brûlée*, and the efforts of the whole party barely sufficed to corner and capture it.

Louis crept again into the lair and caught the other kit which he tied up in his own jacket. We afterwards tramped back to camp, with the recovered trap and the two lynx kittens. The boys had voted to keep them and take them later to Boston as trophies of their excursion to Katah-

din; and they spent the afternoon constructing a pen of logs near the tents, in which to confine their little captives during the remainder of our stay there. During the following night and throughout the next day, the intensely wild little beasts remained crouching in the far corner of the pen and could not be induced to touch the tid-bits of meat offered them. By the succeeding day, however, hunger drove them to eat, and afterwards they rapidly became accustomed to the attentions of the boys, some of whom were constantly about their pen.

They were queer, long-legged, clumsy little gray creatures, with heads that looked too large for their bodies. Tufts of long hair had already appeared at the tips of their ears. Their little bob-tails were a source of much amusement for the boys. Herbert and Gordon had it in view to carry them in a cage to their high school some day, after they returned home. Gordon named them 'Scratch' and 'Bite,' from the fury with which they at first had resented all attempts to pet them. But before a week had barely passed, they permitted the Japanese lad to stroke their heads, though none of the others were able to lay hands on them till later.

Bugbee and Daddy Green returned during the evening following our lynx hunt. Their loads of provisions had given them a hard day on the carries, the sacks of potatoes and corn-meal

weighing over four hundred pounds, the other articles totaling nearly as much more. Daddy grumbled a little — not without reason — that Louis had not been sent to help them. Bugbee, however, said not a word; he appreciated my difficulties.

As nearly as we could reckon since we started, the day following was the Sabbath; and I wished to observe it. The boys took turns reading for two hours from a copy of the 'Portland Transcript' which Bugbee had brought: a literary weekly of irreproachable moral character which has since gone to join the 'innumerable caravan' of journalistic 'has-beens' in the silent land of 'Didn't-Pay!'

That week there was a very good story in it about two lads who had begun life in painful poverty, but eventually attained fame and affluence; and I recall that Gordon and Lucas argued hotly on the desirability of such a life, Gordon declaring that they had worked too hard and had too little fun to suit him, while Lucas contended that fame and fortune brought 'fun' enough of themselves for anybody who wasn't 'bone lazy' and 'a loafer.' The majority of the boys appeared to agree with Lucas; and the discussion finally drifted into 'pow-wow number seven,' the burden of which was whether we should go back to Abol and end the trip from there homeward, or — bold scheme! — hike from our present camp

around the easterly base of Katahdin, thirteen miles or more, to the 'Gulf,' camp for a week at 'Chimney Pond,' ascend Katahdin again from that side, and afterward continue on round the mountain to Sourdnahunk Lake, twenty miles farther. Later descending Sourdnahunk Stream we should be able to reach the West Branch of the Penobscot and so arrive at Abol after making a complete circuit of the mountain — forty miles or more.

I felt it my duty to set the arduous features of so long a trip before the boys in detail, also the food question.

'You will all be obliged to carry packs and endure hardships,' I warned them. 'We shall be getting farther and farther from our base of supplies at Medway. You may have to go hungry at times.'

'But partridges and blueberries are plenty,' urged Porter. 'We could live that way for one week, anyhow!'

In the end they all voted to 'circumnavigate' Katahdin, all save Brooks Lindenheim, whom the others loudly accused of having an attack of 'cold feet.' I still had certain misgivings, but finally concluded to let the majority have its way and learn wisdom on the way.

As the canoes would be of little use on this excursion around Katahdin, I had the guides take all five of them back to Abol next day and thence,

up to the mouth of Sourdnahunk Stream. There they were cached in a thicket, to be embarked in when we arrived at that point fifteen days later — if we reached there as soon as that, of which both Bugbee and I had serious doubts. It was a risk to leave the canoes unguarded for so long a time on the West Branch; but no other course was open to us unless we left Shaddy in charge of them, and Shaddy was greatly needed to help us transport our baggage.

The guides returned from caching the canoes, late Monday evening; and after a noisy morning breaking camp and apportioning packs, the long hike round the southerly end of the mountain to the Gulf began on Tuesday, August 11th. Both light and heavy packs were bestowed on the boys according to their age and estimated strength. On an average I think these must have weighed about twenty-five pounds, though the guides, of course, bore heavier burdens. Little Giartsu, I remember, carried the lynx kittens over his shoulder in a potato sack.

We at last streamed off in a long train, led by Louis with the large tent on his back — too heavy a load for one man, but it could not well be divided.

President Malcolm set the other boys a fine example of democratic equality, by shouldering half a bushel of potatoes — thirty-five pounds. But when all was packed, sacked, and shouldered,

we found that three of the guides would be obliged to come back next day to get what still remained.

After seeing the procession off, I remained behind to take a final look about, extinguish our breakfast fire, and tidy up the log camp for the next party that might come there. I discovered that two of the lads, in the hurry of departure, had left their personal kits behind, and these I had to add to my share of the dunnage.!!

In consequence I failed to overtake the party until it was already a half-hour on its way and had nearly reached the crags where we had captured the lynx kittens.

I found the boys in a state of warlike excitement on account of a *rencontre* with a party of five young fellows whose path had crossed theirs a few minutes previously. These youngsters were apparently on their way to climb the mountain, but had stopped to gather blueberries. Noticing, I suppose, that some of our lads were quite young, one of them called out derisively, 'Hullo, Babes in the Woods! Where are your mothers?'

Now no lad likes to be called a baby, or hear public intimation that he requires a mother's care. In behalf of the Katahdin Republic, Malcolm retorted that it was a pity their interlocutor's mother hadn't taught him better manners.

'Don't you kids get too fresh,' was the answer-

ing advice; then another of the quintet asked where our boys were all going so fast with their loads. 'You remind me of a string of pismires,' he added provocatively.

'Keep your scurvy thoughts to yourself!' quoth Gordon. 'Where we are going is our business. Be so good as to mind your own!'

By this time the *entente cordiale* was hopelessly lost and the youth who had first accosted them remarked that, if he — Gordon — did not keep a more civil tongue in his head, his mother's little darling would soon have a crying spell.

This continued reference to maternal relations proved so exasperating that Gordon, Malcolm, Arthur, Porter, Lucas, and Roscoe threw down their packs and offered to adjust the difficulty then and there. What would have followed salutations so unfortunately begun is not certain. But at this juncture Buggy, who was leading the way, loaded down with his entire camp kit, removed it and came back to inquire into the matter. Louis, too, toiling on under the weight of his enormous pack of canvas, retraced his steps in order to lend a hand. Shaddy, some distance ahead, had heard the altercation and now appeared, still laden with all the firearms of the party. Observing such heavy reënforcements coming up, the enemy hastily moved off, shouting back remarks appropriate to the occasion.

This apparently trivial incident of our tramp around to the Gulf, is recorded on account of what occurred forty-eight hours afterward. If possible (and it usually is), it is very advisable for parties in the wilds to cultivate cordial relations toward fellow trampers and campers with whom they may chance to fall in.

Of our long march through birch woods and over ridges around the southeast shoulder of Katahdin, little need be said save that it was an arduous one for youngsters bearing packs, as it was indeed for us all. An hour was spent from eleven to twelve for lunch and rest, then on again. Not till near five o'clock, after numerous halts, did we enter the great amphitheater of the mountain and the path leading up to Chimney Pond in the Basin; and the summer sun had disappeared behind the frowning battlements of cliff which wall the Gulf, before we reached the place Bugbee had in mind for our first night camp on the east side of the mountain.

This is probably the wildest, most peculiar locality in all New England; and even the far-famed Yosemite Valley has nothing more stern and austere to show the tourist.

To gain a mental picture of Mount Katahdin, it must be considered as a mountain ridge, rather than a peak, lying in the form of a half-moon, or crescent, the rounded side to the west and southwest, and the concave portion to the east and the

northeast. It is in the latter concavity, or Gulf as it is called, lying close up in the throat of it, that the strange little sheet of water is located, to which the name of Chimney Pond has been given from the sheer, upright manner in which the precipices tower above, having some fancied resemblance to a vast chimney. It is here that drifts of snow and ice are often to be seen throughout the year.

After the heat of the day, the shadow of these immense precipices, fully three thousand feet in height, felt refreshingly cool; but as evening drew on it became quite too cold for comfort. I began to fear the boys might take a chill and regretted not having camped on the east or outer shore of the Pond. In every way, too, it was a rather awesome spot. As the gloom of night settled down, the cliffs appeared actually to impend and lean out over the pond. But we were all too tired to make any change before morning.

Firewood had to be brought around from the outer or east shore of the pond, as well as poles for the tents, and altogether our preparations for passing the night proceeded so slowly that it was past eight o'clock before Bugbee was able to cook mush and boil potatoes.

The awesome grandeur of the place quite appalled little Jimmy Knox. As the night shades descended over the black water of Chimney Pond, he approached to ask if I thought it wholly

safe to go to sleep there. What gave the spot an even more sinister air was the 'craiking' of a pair of ravens somewhere in the gloom of the crags above us where they probably had a nest.

We all slept at last, however. The fatigue from our long tramp prevented us from lying awake. I recollect rousing suddenly once just in season to capture Herbert, who was scrambling out past me, jabbering incoherently, seemingly bent on one of his sleep-walking rambles.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAMP AT CHIMNEY POND

THE GULF, or Basin, under the 'Chimney' at Mount Katahdin, is one of the grandest places in which it was ever my lot to wake of a morning. Eastward the August sun just risen was looking straight across the little pond, the surface of which was all a-glitter, while behind towered those three thousand feet of beetling granite precipices, walling us far round on either hand.

I shouted our rising call and the boys, as one by one they came blinking forth from their tent, stood silent and awestruck when their eyes wandered up those stupendous cliffs.

An eagle screamed a thousand feet above us and presently its eyrie was discovered on a shelf of the crags. Hearing that kingly high note, the ravens again began their querulous croaking, and a marmot whistled shrilly. It was all quite in harmony with the stern, wild scenery. One hardly would have been surprised to see the harpy-like form of old Pomola herself appear at gaze on some of those lofty rocks.

Weary from their long hike of the previous day, the boys had been slow in waking and dressing. Malcolm and Porter on first appearing had challenged each other to a dip in the pond, but

noting the still unmelted snowdrift, near the foot of the cliffs, both suddenly thought better of it! Despite the August heat of that week the air was quite cold in that deep-shaded Basin.

Shaddy and Louis, who had risen earlier, toted great armfuls of firewood from the woods on the far side of the pond, and Bugbee had his camp-fire blazing cheerfully. Jimmy, Morris, little Giartsu, and Charley Bowen gathered about it to warm their fingers after hurried ablutions at the pond shore. Roscoe appeared sneezing and shivering, having evidently taken cold. He felt peevish.

‘This is an awful place!’ he grumbled with a shrinking glance toward that snowdrift. Immediately he was dosed with ‘cold tablets,’ given a dipperful of hot water to drink, and induced to run briskly round the pond twice, accompanied by the ever-vigilant and helpful Malcolm.

With breakfast the party warmed up, and even Roscoe, after a look at the Chimney, declared that he was ‘glad he had come,’ but refused to join in the merry game of snowballing in which the other boys indulged up at the snowdrift.

During the forenoon we skirted the Basin, searching for the two trails by which, we had been told, it was possible to ascend Katahdin from this side. We discovered one that appeared practicable and which started about a quarter of

a mile north of the pond and zigzagged up among and over rugged ledges and immense granite rocks.

Katahdin, indeed, looks to be made up of vast masses of solid granite, everywhere besprinkled and overstrewn with thousands of loose boulders of the same substance and of all sizes, huge and small. Some of these loose, detached fragments are stupendous; and the entire narrow summit, or 'knife edge,' leading to the highest pinnacles or culms, at the southeast end of the mountain, appears to be composed of little else save these broken fragments of loose rock.

The other route by which the mountain may be climbed is near the south side of the pond quite close to the steep cliffs which culminate in one of the southeast peaks, bearing the name of Pomola, the fierce winged guardian deity of the mountain that the Indians believed carried venturesome hunters to the cliffs and devoured their bodies there, as eagles devour fawns.

We asked Louis about this; but he would say little, and it is to be feared that he had become tinctured with the modern unbelief in the supernatural. For when I related the stories which old Chief Neptune of the Penobscot tribe at Oldtown had once told me of the ferocity of Pomola, Louis merely grinned and remarked, 'Neptune much big fool!' It is sad about this modern doubt! There were times during our trip when I heartily

wished that I could frighten Louis with the consequences of his misdeeds, either in this world or the next!

Some benevolent mountain climber had laid a little pile of stones at the point where this second route of ascent began and had written upon a bit of board stuck into the stones, that a fearless climber would be able to reach the summit by this path, but counseled all timid persons to use the other trail. 'This one is as steep as "Jack's beanstalk"!' was the postscript to the advice on the board. It certainly looked it.

While we were exploring for paths up the mountain, the report of a carbine reëchoed tremendously about the Basin.

'That's old Louis!' Malcolm exclaimed; and I wondered what fresh infraction of the game laws the Indian might be perpetrating in my absence. Hastening back to camp, I found that he had fired at one of the eagles which he had seen drop to the crag where we had guessed their nest was located.

'Guess I killum,' Louis remarked casually.

The other smaller bird, probably the mate, had soared away. But Louis appeared disinclined to climb to the eyrie when this was suggested to him. Contrary to my advice, Shaddy declared that he would attempt it and immediately started to do so, ascending first by the Pomola path — as we came to call it — for four or five

hundred feet, then turning aside to the right, proceeding along narrow ledges on the crags and afterward climbing slowly upward again until he reached the nest.

As his head rose where he seemed able to look into the eyrie, we who were watching from below saw him suddenly duck down to cover of the ledge and at the same moment perceived what looked to be the wounded eagle flop over the brink of the rock and cling to Shaddy's back. Even from that distance above us — not less than a thousand feet — the angry screams of the big bird were distinctly audible.

The boys shouted in great excitement. Shaddy appeared to have all he could do to hold on there without fighting the eagle that seemed to be paying its respects to him with beak and claws, flapping its powerful wings continuously.

What to do to help him was not clear. The boys ran about helplessly, though Gordon had started to climb up. Turning to summon Bugbee, I caught Louis gripping his carbine as if about to risk a shot, and ran to prevent, by force if necessary, so rash an act.

While we were rushing to and fro in a grand flurry, a large, loose rock on which Shaddy was resting his weight, slipped away from under his feet and came crashing down the cliffs, setting several others in motion on the way. The aspect of these, bounding downward, was so terrifying

that every one took to his heels; and in point of fact several of the stones fell within a few yards of our tent. Those of us whom the instinct for self-preservation had not wholly prevented from watching poor Shaddy saw him suspended for a few seconds from the shelf of rock. Then with a supreme effort he raised himself by his arms and, in spite of the punishment the eagle was dealing out to him, crawled up where the nest lay. There for some time a battle royal appeared to rage betwixt man and bird. Sticks, twigs, dirt, bones, and feathers came rattling down in a dusty cloud, and with it two squalling young eaglets flopped helplessly to the rocks below.

Shaddy was clearly winning the day, for immediately the wounded eagle followed its nest and young down the crags.

But soon pitiful halloos came to us from the victor, who, it transpired, was still in trouble. The burden of his outcries was that he was unable to get down. Either he had lost his nerve and become dizzy, or the rock which had fallen was his only means of leaving the eyrie. We couldn't make out, from the indistinct words he shouted, what the matter was, and I finally persuaded Louis to climb up as near as possible and talk with him.

The Indian did not like the task, but at length complied, and we waited on his movements for some time. Meanwhile the other eagle had re-

appeared and was swooping over the intruder in its eyrie. As often as it stooped to the ledge, its wounded mate on the rocks below would scream savagely.

At last Louis climbed down to us and reported. 'Shad much fool!' he explained. 'Got blood in him face. No see good. Say gettum rope.'

Thereupon we made haste to piece up a rope twenty feet long, from the lines off our big tent, by tying four or five of them together; and this I now succeeded in carrying up near enough to throw to Shaddy where he lay crouched on the eyrie ledge. But, as I had feared from the first, there was nothing there to which the end of the line could be attached; and we were as badly off as before. It seemed to me that Shaddy might swing down off the ledge if he tried, and I told him so; but he kept saying over and over that his eyes 'jiggered' and that the eagle had so scratched his hands that he couldn't hold on by them. I climbed down to take counsel with Bugbee.

All this time Malcolm had been urging me to let him go up and help Shaddy down; but this was not practicable, and the plan we finally hit on was to cut and fetch from the other side of the pond a long birch pole. In trimming off the branches, stubs were left long enough to be grasped by the hand, the idea being for the pole to serve as a ladder.

By the united exertions of Bugbee, Louis, Malcolm, and myself, the pole was at last passed up the crags and planted, albeit precariously, among rocks at the foot of the ledge where Shaddy was still awaiting rescue; and after many exhortations — some of them more forcible than polite — he was encouraged to the point of clambering down.

The poor chap was trembling all over; and after seeing the condition he was in our charity for him returned. The skin on both his hands was literally torn to strings; his face, too, was covered with blood which had no doubt got into his eyes. His arms and body were black-and-blue from the flogging and mauling the eagle had given him with its one unbroken wing. Shaddy, in fact, was badly used up. We had to dress his hurts with vaseline, bandages, surgeon's plaster, and such other applications as I could improvise to meet his present necessities; and afterward he was put to bed.

That wounded eagle had put up a valiant fight for her home and young and, I could but feel, deserved a better fate than to be ruthlessly dispatched by Louis — which happened while most of us were engaged, succoring and caring for Shaddy. The eagle's mate continued to sail in great circles over the pond, for an hour or more, until Louis, who was amusing himself by sending bullet after bullet skyward, may have touched

it with one, when it suddenly bore away across the summit of Katahdin and was seen no more. The Indian had plucked a handful of quill feathers from the dead Bird of Freedom and these he arranged in true aboriginal fashion in the band of his hat.

‘Him big bird,’ he boasted, ‘I killum!’

I was not sorry to observe that my boy party wholly refrained from congratulating Louis on his marksmanship and preserved complete silence as to his entire performance. Their better feelings had plainly been revolted by it — as an unprovoked and wholly unnecessary attack on an unoffending inhabitant of the place.

Shaddy had his supper carried to him that afternoon. That same afternoon, too, the Commissary-General was forced to exercise his talents in a new field of duty. All day Roscoe had been complaining of toothache and toward evening crept away to conceal his anguish in the tent. Seeking him out at length, I discovered that his trouble came from a decayed molar of his first teeth, which had overstayed its proper time in his jaw.

‘Better let me pull it for you,’ I offered. ‘It is quite loose and will not hurt much.’ But Roscoe declined relief at my ’prentice hand for the time being, but about an hour afterward came of his own accord to me and besought my aid.

‘I’ve stood it just as long as I can!’ he cried.

‘Have you got any pincers you can extract it with?’

I replied that, if it were like to come out hard, I would advise him to use the old-fashioned method of drawing it himself, by tying one end of a string to it and affixing the other end to a flat stone. He could then take the stone in his right hand and throw it vigorously when I should have counted three and shouted, ‘Fire!’

‘But what if my courage fails me and I don’t throw it?’

‘Then you will have to go on with your tooth-ache.’

‘All right,’ agreed Roscoe. ‘I guess I’ll fire.’

We found a string. ‘But first let me see just how loose it really is,’ I suggested, and took hold of it very gently, with my thumb and finger, then with a sudden smart jerk captured the tooth before he was aware, and not a little to his surprise! But not all first teeth can be extracted so easily. All my first molars had deep roots — and painful memories!

Shaddy’s misadventure made me aware of a possible danger incident to camping there, and I had determined to shift to the other side of Chimney Pond that very evening, but had finally abandoned the idea until next morning, partly on account of Shaddy, who was lying-up in the guides’ tent, feeling pretty sore, and partly because of the fine wood-pile which Daddy Green

had been accumulating during the afternoon, near our camp-fire. Little Jimmy and Giartsu, too, had constructed a comfortable pen for their wildcat kittens, hard by the boys' tent, which would also have to be moved with our camp.

While we were eating supper by the firelight, however, the danger of the situation there was emphasized by a stone half the size of a barrel tumbling down the mountain from somewhere far aloft. It fell near one side of the tent that the boys occupied, so close as to drive a tent peg deep into the earth and jerk the whole tent over to one side.

At first we believed, of course, that it was an accidental stone-fall — one of the myriad boulders up near the summit that had broken loose and rolled down. Since it was hardly to be expected that another would immediately follow this one, I made no further haste than to remark that we would not wait till next day to move to a safer spot, but leave at once after supper. I had hardly more than spoken, however, when another smaller rock came rattling down and bounded out quite near the camp-fire. Still we supposed this might be one dislodged by the first in its descent; but when a few minutes later another large boulder came crashing down, the guides and the boys sprang up in much excitement exclaiming,

‘Somebody’s doing that!’

‘Maybe campers on top of the mountain,’ Bugbee suggested. ‘Perhaps they are rolling rocks down for fun.’

Thereupon Daddy Green began shouting, ‘Stop that! Don’t roll your rocks down here. You’ll kill somebody!’

Then we all shouted; yet it is doubtful if our voices reached the summit, though it is possible.

Nothing further occurred for five minutes; then Bugbee remarked, ‘I guess they must have heard us and quit.’ But soon after, two more rocks rolled down close together, broken bits of them flying clean into the pond.

‘I believe it’s those young scamps who insulted us yesterday morning as we were coming over here,’ Gordon now declared. ‘They went off muttering threats, you know.’

This did not appear wholly likely; the boys, however, instantly jumped to that conclusion, and ran to get their guns. I found it difficult to dissuade them from shooting wildly up the mountain, in reprisal.

Thus wars are begun, from suspicions and misunderstandings.

While I was advising calmer measures, Louis, from behind the guides’ tent, suddenly discharged two shots which, judging from the blaze of his carbine, were directed recklessly up the mountain. I went at once to stop this; and while I was expostulating with the Indian several of

our party declared they heard faint answering hoots far up in the darkness. I myself heard nothing and surmised that what the boys heard may quite likely have been the ravens saluting Louis's shots with their weird notes.

No more stones came down, however; and whether those which had fallen started from natural causes, or wanton mischief, remained an open question. Whatever the origin, the occurrence gave us a disagreeable hour's work in the dark, moving camp round Chimney Pond. The unfortunate Shaddy was so stiff and lame from his encounter with the eagle that Malcolm and Daddy Green were obliged to assist him in walking around the pond shore. No very good site was found for the tents, and altogether a rather comfortless night followed, enlivened by a thunder-shower sometime after midnight, and clouds of mosquitoes which our hastily pitched tents had failed wholly to exclude.

In consequence of these nocturnal discomfures, we made but a late start next morning to ascend the mountain. I had decided to take the easier of the two routes — that is to say, the one farthest round the Gulf to the northeast. This leads through spruce growth up to the foot of the East Slide, for a mile or more of loose stones which may be climbed without much danger, to the brink of the 'Saddle,' where the flattened summit of Katahdin begins. I had never as-

cended the mountain from the east side, my two former trips having been made from Abol up the Great Slide on the west, or converse side.

Bugbee put up a lunch of corn-cake, biscuits, and cheese; we also took along the coffee-pot, for, although there are no springs on the plateau, climbers can usually get water from hollows in the ledges, or in the huge boulders scattered over the level tableland. Here, too, there are what tourists have nicknamed 'Katahdin wood-lots,' little patches of an acre or two in a place where stunted spruce is found growing — old trees, perhaps, but scarcely two feet in height. In some spots these thickets are so dense and compacted together that one can walk on the tops of them, or at least could readily do so with snowshoes.

Shaddy was left behind and I also induced little Jimmy Knox and Giartsu to remain with him at our new camp on the pretext of building another pen for their kittens which had not yet been brought from the camping-place we had so hurriedly abandoned the previous evening. The climb to the summit of the mountain would, I feared, prove too difficult for these two young lads.

None of us got farther than the foot of the East Slide that day, however, for, while we were still toiling up through the spruce wood to reach it, fog with rain burst suddenly over the top of Katahdin, and the day bade fair to prove so wet

and misty that we turned back and returned to camp after an absence of less than three hours.

But even during so brief a time a small tragedy had occurred. The two boys were at work on the new pen for their kits when a couple of rough-looking men appeared at the camp and, after making numerous inquiries concerning our party, announced themselves as game wardens on the track of poachers. They questioned Shaddy for some time and even threatened the poor chap with arrest if he failed to reveal all our movements during the foregoing three weeks. They visited the first site of our camp at Chimney Pond and while looking about there discovered the lynx kittens. Without the least compunction either of mercy, or kindness, one of them broke open the pen, killed both kits with a club, and carried off their bodies.

They had been gone for some time before we came back, and pursuit seemed useless. Shaddy did not know them, and they gave no names. Bugbee and I doubted that these high-handed visitors were really game wardens, or that their motive in killing and carrying away the kits had been other than to secure the State bounty of four dollars a scalp then paid for the Canada lynx. The boys were much aggrieved over the slaughter of their pets; but under the circumstances there was little we could do about it.

Rain fell all next day. Mists shrouded the

mountain. Time passed heavily in camp. Every thing readable had long ago been read and re-read. It was too cold to swim in the pond, which at best does not look inviting for bathing. The ravens croaked high in the fog. Malcolm, Gordon, and Porter started to climb Pomola Peak, but gave it up and returned wet to their skins — which resulted in Gordon's being laid up with a cold next day.

Still it rained. We could not go on, and August days were passing. So were our provisions. Anxiety on this score began again to beset me. Louis fished in Chimney Pond, but to no purpose. Daddy Green went out and shot two rabbits which Bugbee fried to go with our corn-meal mush and potatoes that night; under great difficulties for fuel we also fired a double bean-hole that afternoon and put two potfuls to bake therein overnight.

It is astonishing what a party of twenty-two abnormally hungry people will eat! Even the disabled Shaddy ate well: he was now able to be up and about, though still bandaged and very sore.

The weather next morning had apparently cleared; but while we were at breakfast rain suddenly began to fall again, and mist once more settled thick over Katahdin.

During the forenoon an elderly man, clad in yellow oilskins, appeared at Bugbee's camp-fire.

What his business was, or why he was traveling so far alone and in such weather, was not divulged. He told Bugbee that his name was Jackman and said that he lived 'over on Wassatiquoik Stream' and was 'just out looking round.' Probably Bugbee mentioned our chronic lack of supplies to him, for the old fellow was led to inform me that he possessed two sheep that he would sell me if I would send a man home with him to help tote them back to us. The price he named was four dollars per animal. I accepted the offer and commissioned Louis to accompany Jackman and fetch the mutton to camp.

It was late next day when they finally returned carrying about a hundred pounds of some kind of dressed flesh, cut up, lashed in a pack, and suspended from a pole they bore between them, on their shoulders. Both declared the meat was mutton; but Bugbee privately confided to me that he 'felt pretty sure' it was deer meat! As for Louis, I had long ceased to place confidence in anything he said when it was of the least advantage for him to lie.

It was good fresh meat, however, and Bugbee thought we might as well take Jackman's word for it and ask no questions, since we needed it so much.

Jackman passed the night with us and delighted the hearts of the boys by telling them marvelous stories of moose and bear. Malcolm

confided to me, however, that he thought the old fellow was a great romancer.

‘He’s a queer old boy!’ said Malcolm.

Thick dark clouds overspread the whole sky the following morning — our fifth day there — with Katahdin entirely obscured. When I asked our new-found acquaintance, Jackman, what he thought of the weather, he cast an eye to the mountain and answered,

‘Wal, we’re right in the midst o’ “dog-days” now, when the weather’s gen’ly pooty onsartin. Last year, I rec’lect we didn’t see ole Thunder-Cap out in plain sight but once all August.’

‘Ole Thunder-Cap’ we found to be Jackman’s name for Katahdin.

‘But I say,’ the old man continued, with an engaging grin, ‘ef ye kinder want to stay along a spell, lookin’ for a clear day, I don’t mind sellin’ ye another sheep. Mutton’s pooty good now.’

Many things had to be considered, and during the forenoon pow-wow number eight was held to discuss the pros and cons of remaining longer at Chimney Pond. A majority of the boys, it was discovered, were not greatly in favor of making a second ascent.

‘We’ve climbed Katahdin once already,’ Gordon remarked. ‘We saw the view that first time. It was grand. But I don’t care a great deal to see it again. I would rather go on from here to Sourdnehunk Lake!’

Bugbee, I found, had been giving the boys alluring accounts of the fine scenery about this northern lake and the trout in its waters. The matter was presently put to vote, with the result that the majority decided, three to one, to leave Chimney Pond that very day.

As Jackman still lingered about the camp, I struck a bargain with him to take Shaddy's place and help us on the long hike of ten miles around the northern shoulder of Katahdin, first to Wassatiquoik Pond in the shadow of a high mountain of that name, and thence off to the westward for about nine miles farther, to Sourdnahunk.

Jackman told us that there was a lumber trail that could be followed to Wassatiquoik Pond, and offered his services as guide at three dollars a day.

The trail proved but an indifferent path, however, where much time was spent cutting away windfalls in dense woods, to open a practicable route for a party carrying packs. We were all day reaching Wassatiquoik Pond, camped late on its dismal shores, with not a few discomforts from showers and mosquitoes; and it was not until the afternoon of our second day from Chimney Pond that the blue expanse of Sourdnahunk Lake at last opened to view through the thick spruce forest.

CHAPTER XIII

A CHAPTER OF ALARMS

It was near sunset when we finally arrived at Sourdnahunk Lake, after the hardest tramp the boys had taken thus far. The trail — the only one, Jackman told us, from Katahdin — was often indistinct and much obstructed by fallen trees. There were numerous rapid brooks to cross and several steep, wooded ridges. Withal I was obliged to rely wholly on what the guides told me of the country, having till then never visited Sourdnahunk myself. It seems to me that the distance from Chimney Pond must have been fully twenty miles, though Jackman and Green declared that it was thirteen and fifteen, alternately; neither of them really knew how far it was. Had I realized in advance what was before us, I might have hesitated about taking the boys on a hike so long and difficult. They bore up fairly well, though once little Jimmy sat down and cried, at the foot of one of the steepest ridges.

‘Stop that noise and come along!’ was all the consolation he got from Brother Malcolm, who was ashamed of him. I had to go back and lead him for a while.

Our packs, of course, were a great handicap. Throughout the middle of the day, too, the heat

was oppressive. At about three in the afternoon a shower drenched us, but was not wholly ungrateful. I had begun to fear that we might have to camp in the forest, but quite unexpectedly the woods opened ahead, and immediately we came out in plain view of the lake.

To-day Sourdnahunk is much frequented by sportsmen and others for the trout-fishing, and there are, I am told, a number of comfortable camps for entertainment; but at the time of our excursion a single deserted shanty, built of large poles and roofed with sheets of birch bark, was the only evidence that human beings had ever visited its wild shores. What looked to be an unbroken wilderness, with dark peaks in the background, encompassed it to the east and north, while behind us, to the southward, loomed the vast blocklike masses of Katahdin.

The lake itself is, I judged, from six to seven miles in length, being of slightly hourglass shape and having an average width of two miles and a half. Its shores are mostly rocky or boggy. One can hardly term it a picturesque expanse. There are few fine sandy beaches.

The name 'Sourdnahunk' is said to come from the Indian word, 'Essourdnahunk,' meaning 'Water-in-the-middle-of-the-valley,' or so at least Bugbee told us. When I inquired of Louis, he merely grunted at first, then after a time muttered that it meant 'Water-that-falls-down-hill-

fast'; but this probably referred to Sourdnahunk Stream instead of the lake of the same name.

Jackman, who was leading the party when we suddenly emerged on the lake, proceeded at once to the shanty and, turning at the door, said, 'This is my camp. I built it myself. But I'll let it to you folks at a dollar a day.'

As his assertion seemed possible, and we needed shelter, I closed with the offer. I may add here, however, that I learned later not only that Jackman had nothing to do with the building of the hut, but had never possessed part nor lot in its ownership; in short, I found that our new guide was as near being a crook and a grafter as the virgin soil of the Maine woods is capable of producing.

Bugbee had set about preparing our evening meal, with a quiet fidelity that was very comforting. After stacking their packs inside the shanty, several of the party refreshed themselves by a dip in the lake, which, at this point on the east shore, is shallow. But all the boys were very tired and naturally, I suppose, felt irritable; presently a dispute arose between Herbert and Schermerhorn Adams, during which the latter so far forgot himself as to give Herbert a sharp slap. I did not witness this breach of the peace myself, and no one reported it to me at the time. But Malcolm took knowledge of it and next morning convened the Supreme Court and bade the Chief


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Marshal bring Schermerhorn before it on a charge of conduct unbecoming to a citizen of the Katahdin Republic.

The Commissary-General, being very busy otherwise that morning, did not attend the trial, in fact was unaware of it; a while afterwards, however, I espied Schermerhorn sitting quite alone on a rock at a distance behind the shanty. Something in his attitude there so wrought on my curiosity that I was at length moved to go and ask if he were ill.

‘No,’ he replied soberly, ‘I am serving my sentence. They sentenced me to sit out here for two hours, and later I’ve got a public apology to make.’

I inquired how he felt about it.

‘Well, of course it is mortifying and goes against the grain. But I guess it is all right,’ he admitted candidly. ‘Herb was mighty aggravating, but I had no business to hit him.’

It was truly remarkable how well the Republic was functioning. I took good care not to interfere in any way, but put it squarely up to the boys to govern themselves and let the majority rule.

The Commissary-General, indeed, had plenty to occupy his attention otherwise. The food question was always acute with us, to say nothing of my worries from Louis, and the now fresh anxieties caused by this new guide Jack-

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man, whose character was unfolding in a rather disheartening manner.

I had relied on the trout of Sourdnahunk; but there was no boat and the water proved to be so shallow for a hundred yards offshore that fishing was found to be useless. The boys reported, however, seeing fish break water at a distance away; and we decided to build a raft to fish from.

Some years before forest fires had killed the spruce growth in the rear of the shanty. I set Daddy Green and Louis to felling the dry trees, and sent Jackman to find, cut, and twist birch withes. Malcolm marshaled the boys in three teams for dragging the logs to the lake. In the course of two hours we had a rick of fifty logs, by count, piled alongshore.

But the water was so shallow that our raft had to be constructed forty or fifty feet out in the lake, necessitating much barefoot wading knee deep in water. To insure stability, two layers of logs were laid on top of the first, crosswise, and the whole structure bound together as firmly as possible with Jackman's withes.

As completed, the makeshift raft was about twenty feet long by nine feet wide, and afforded dry footing for as many as six persons. Poles from ten to fourteen feet in length were cut, for propelling it about. Later on, too, a mast was set up and the guides' small tent used as a sail for

navigating it up and down the deeper waters of the lake.

Much of our first day at Sourdnahunk was occupied in constructing the raft. Of its safety as a 'seagoing' craft I entertained some doubts, and warned the boys not to embark on it until Louis and Jackman had tested it by poling out in deep water. Later in the afternoon these two worthies put off with fishing tackle and immediately were observed, by the interested spectators ashore, to be catching fish rapidly. They secured twenty pounds or more of red-spots and one lake trout, so-called, that must have weighed nine or ten pounds.

But, as evidence of the appetites that prevailed among us, I may add that most of this entire catch was devoured that very evening!

The sunset and twilight over the lake were very beautiful that night; and nothing could have been more musical than the clear alto calling of the loons to each other up and down the long expanse of water. The Indian, who had better eyes than the most of our party, declared he saw three moose come out to drink on the farther shore, then enter the lake to grub up lily root.

'Spouse I shootum?' he ventured. 'No warden up here, too far for warden to come.' And again I peremptorily forbade him to do anything of the sort.

After supper Bugbee approached me to ask

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how many days we should be likely to remain there. 'If we stay more than three days I am afraid we shall run short of supplies again,' he informed me. 'I thought we would better consider this, since it is so far out to the settlement,' he added.

It was a very necessary forethought, indeed, as our return journey from Sourdnahunk to Medway would occupy at least four days, and probably five. The trout, of course, would help us out a good deal; yet to feed the boys long on a fish diet was inexpedient.

I asked Jackman how large a flock of sheep he kept at the place where he had said that he owned a small farm on the Wassatiquoik. He hesitated a little and appeared confused, then replied that he believed there were eleven, counting four spring lambs. When I inquired if he would sell us one or two of the lambs, he consented to do so if I would permit Louis to go with him to fetch the meat; — and Louis answered, 'Me go,' with great alacrity.

I had not forgotten our suspicions that the 'mutton' Jackman had previously sold us was in reality venison. None the less I closed with his offer, merely stipulating that he should fetch me the pelts of the lambs along with the meat.

This request plainly caused him to hesitate, and he parried by saying that he should have to ask two dollars more if he brought the pelts.

‘But what do you want of them?’ he queried. ‘You can’t tan lambskins up here in the woods!’

I persisted, however, in my desire to have the pelts. ‘I want to see how good the wool is that grows on sheep up in this part of the State,’ I explained.

Jackman was clearly reluctant, but finally acquiesced. Before setting off next morning, however, both he and Louis asked for their pay to date. Feeling quite positive that, if I paid them, they would never return, I declined giving them any money until their engagement expired.

At length they set off looking much dissatisfied and somewhat perplexed. If, as I suspected, they meant to kill deer contrary to law and palm the venison off for lamb, I believed that I had them cornered, since a lamb’s pelt could hardly be mistaken for a deer’s hide; but I had yet to learn what that pair of rogues were capable of. Truth to say, other cares immediately beset me.

The boys had been importuning Bugbee to set that hazard-fraught bear-trap again — a peril I was desirous of avoiding, if possible. By good fortune we had thus far escaped accidents growing out of it, for which I was duly thankful. I had no wish to tempt Providence further! Bugbee, who appreciated my feelings on the subject, was resorting to various subterfuges to delay setting the trap, but finally was led to

promise doing so next day, as nothing else would satisfy the boys.

While cogitating by what devices another bear hunt might be mitigated, an even more sinister peril loomed over us. Morris Chapman, it appeared, had gone quietly back and lain down in the shanty, directly after breakfast that morning; and Porter now came to tell me that he believed Morris was ill.

‘He’s groaning to himself, something awful, and his face is all broke out!’ Porter exclaimed.

I went hastily to inquire into it. I found the boy huddled beneath blankets, but when I spoke to him, he looked up. ‘I feel pretty sick,’ he muttered thickly; and I saw that he appeared fevered and that his face was covered by fine red blotches. At first I supposed this to be nettle rash, or an outbreak of urticaria due to something he had eaten. He said his head ached and he seemed very hot. In fact he looked seriously ill. I felt alarmed and asked Bugbee to come and see him and tell me what he thought of the attack.

‘It can hardly be from the food,’ Bugbee decided. ‘The trout they ate last night were all fresh and good, and this morning they’ve had nothing but mush and sugar, with coffee. It looks to me like measles,’ declared Bugbee at length.

‘That is hardly possible,’ I objected. ‘There

has been no exposure to measles up here in the woods. If Morris was exposed before we started, the disease would have shown itself three weeks ago. The same would be true of scarlatina or chicken-pox.'

'You don't suppose it is smallpox, do you, sir?' Bugbee suddenly inquired.

'No, we have met no case of it,' I reassured him.

'But sometimes lumbermen, particularly French Canadians, bring smallpox with them when they come into the woods to work,' Bugbee explained. 'And when any one of them has it, the others generally put him in a camp off by himself. You don't suppose, do you, that anybody with smallpox had been at some of the camps where we stopped on our way round here?' Bugbee questioned anxiously. 'They say, you know, that smallpox will keep alive in a place like that, for a year or more.'

I looked at Morris again and a terrible fear fell on me, as I thought of all those lads exposed and stricken, one after another, by that most awful of all diseases and that, too, afar in the wilderness with no medical aid and no nurses! Oh, why had I consented to take them to such a remote region!

But a more practical question was, what should I do now? What ought I to do first? Clearly Morris must be quarantined at once,

separated and placed at a distance from the remainder of the party, before the others should take the disease — if indeed they had not done so already.

For the moment panic seized me.

Summoning Malcolm and five others who were fishing out on the raft, I collected the entire party, including Shaddy and Daddy Green, and inquired how many of them had ever been vaccinated. Malcolm, Jimmy, Porter, Arthur Fairbanks, little Oteri, and Schermerhorn Adams knew that they had been; the rest were less certain as to this; four thought that they had been vaccinated years previously; but Shaddy was sure that he had not been. Daddy Green said that he had been, but it was thirty years ago, so long that the protective influence had doubtless 'run out.'

To quarantine Morris was evidently the first move to be made; and this we accomplished by pitching the smaller of our two tents at a distance of about a quarter of a mile back in the woods, then getting Morris to his feet and helping him to it. He surmised at once that something dangerous was the matter with him and grew much excited, even tearful.

'Am I going to die?' he cried. 'Have I got cholera?'

Thus far I had told only Malcolm, Porter, and Lucas what we feared. The others stood huddled

together near the shanty, silent and vaguely apprehensive of calamity. It appeared wise to inform them, and I bade Malcolm call a pow-wow, tell them all about it, and give directions as to what each of them must do in the emergency that threatened.

‘Tell them there must be no panic and that, if an epidemic starts, we must all face it bravely and do our best to help each other,’ I advised him. ‘Hold them together. Don’t let any of them get frightened and start to run away,’ I admonished.

It will be plain, of course, that I was much alarmed myself. In fact, I was scared ‘blue’!

I could not seem to think of anything else that could ail Morris, with such peculiar symptoms. Naturally, too, I felt culpable for conducting so large a party of youngsters to so great a distance from civilization and medical aid in case of illness. My only excuse to myself was that till we started I had no idea the party would be so large.

A dreary day followed. I made Morris as comfortable as possible on a bed of boughs and blankets in the small tent and visited him once an hour, but kept the others away. It seemed to me that we ought to remain in this place at least until we learned whether there would be other cases, and that would take a fortnight or more. Yet what should we do for food during all that time? Two of our guides would have to be sent to

Medway again, or else out to Patten in Aroostook County. That, too, must needs be hazardous, in case one or both of them came down with smallpox in the settlement.

It was not easy to decide what line of conduct should be adopted. I felt utterly inadequate for so grave an emergency. Bugbee, too, was equally at a loss. Finally I resolved to dispatch Shadwell to Patten, next morning, for a doctor — if possibly one could be found and persuaded to come to us. Meantime I set the boys fishing for trout in the lake. Malcolm took them out on the raft in parties of four at a time, since this would occupy their minds and add to the food supply.

At two in the afternoon when I carried nourishment to Morris, he still refused to eat and the rash on his face and arms was becoming confluent, but looked a little less fiercely red.

When I told old Bugbee about this, that worthy man exclaimed, 'It has struck in! If it's struck in, he won't live long! He will die within twenty-four hours!' he assured me.

Just at sunset, however, when I went for a fifth time to see how Morris was, I found him sitting up on the boughs, and perceived at once that he was vastly better. His temperature seemed not much above normal; the eruption had nearly disappeared; and he declared that he was hungry.

In short, that was the end of Morris's malady; and exactly what had been the matter with him, I am still unable to say. Probably a dietary disorder which a physician would have diagnosed correctly from the first. But he had certainly been very ill. Neither measles nor variola could have displayed an eruption of more alarming aspect.

During the next three or four days Morris's skin, over his entire body, peeled and rubbed off as he bathed, yet the rash had been largely superficial; no pits were left. To look back on it, our smallpox scare was laughable; but it was terribly disturbing while it lasted.

I was so thankfully happy over the outcome that I said little against setting the bear-trap.

The next day there was a stiff wind and the boys, with Daddy Green's assistance, stepped a tall mast on the raft and using the now unoccupied tent as a leg-o'-mutton sail, began voyaging slowly and prudently about the lake. Sourdna-hunk at that time literally swarmed with trout. For a guess, we caught over three hundred pounds during the six days we were there, and this succulent addition to the food supply went far to relieve my immediate fears of a famine. We had trout at our three meals each day.

Louis and Jackman had been expected back on the evening of the second day; but they failed to appear until nightfall of the third. Each brought

about seventy-five pounds of fresh mutton on his back, and they had two lamb pelts.

‘I hope these will satisfy you,’ Jackman remarked with intention, as he unrolled the pelts and spread them out on the ground before me.

They were undoubtedly lamb skins, quite freshly removed; and I paid him his price for the two lambs he said he had taken from his own little flock at home. Louis, too, who stood quietly regarding me, volunteered a remark: ‘Too bad kill littlum lamb,’ he affirmed, which struck me as being unusual compassion for the Indian.

The incident had its afterclap which I may relate here in advance of our story. The day before we finally left Sourdnahunk, three men with guns appeared at the shanty while we were taking our luncheon. They looked to be settlers and farmers and appeared respectable. After giving us good-day, one of them said that his name was Stevens and then presented his two companions as ‘neighbors’ of his. He afterwards inquired who was the head — he may have said the ‘boss’ — of the party there. Malcolm rose from the table and introduced me as the person in question.

‘Well, we have come on delicate business,’ Stevens admitted. ‘But the fact is I lost two lambs a few days ago, and I have pretty good evidence that they were stolen by an Indian and

an old scamp named Jackman, who were seen at my place that same day, and that they fetched the lambs up here.' He added in a friendly tone that he had not come to make unnecessary trouble. 'I'm not a fighting character,' he confessed. 'I only want just what belongs to me, and nothing more.'

There was little doubt that the man spoke the truth, and, going to the rear of the shanty where I had seen Louis and Jackman a moment before, partaking of fried mutton, I called to them. But they had suddenly disappeared. I couldn't find them anywhere.

I then bade Bugbee fetch the lambs' pelts, for I had seen him roll them up and lay them aside.

'Now if these skins are off my lambs, you will find they have a little dab of red paint over the fore shoulder,' Stevens explained; and, sure enough, when we stretched them out, there was the stripe of red on each.

I told him that we had purchased the lambs of Jackman who said they were his.

"'His'!" one of our visitors cried in derision. 'That old rascal never owned a sheep in his life — but he has stolen a good many!'

There was, of course, but one thing to be done and that was to settle for the lambs, since we had already eaten the meat. This I did; and, after lunching with us, our three new acquaintances departed taking the lambs' pelts.

Jackman and Louis kept out of sight as long as our callers remained, and indeed until after dark that evening. Next morning I took Louis aside and asked him to explain. He replied hardily, 'Me no take lambs. Jackman say, "Dese my lambs."'

After so ready an exhibition of mendacity, I thought it was not worth while to get Jackman's version, but paid him his wages to date, deducting eight dollars, and then bade him get out, though I had hoped to keep him until we had got down Sourdnahunk Stream to our canoes at the West Branch. But a sheep-stealer in our party was too much!

Meanwhile the boys had been enjoying a fine time fishing, sailing the raft, and swimming in the lake. Two of them, who could not swim before, had learned to do so there. Malcolm and Porter had undertaken the task of swimming-masters. They were unable, however, to teach Oteri, hard as the little brown boy strove to learn. The explanation that they gave for his inability to keep on the surface was whimsical, though there may possibly be a grain of truth in it: they declared that his bones were too heavy. The Commissary-General, who was never a good swimmer — perhaps his bones were also too heavy! — had no part in these exercises. Malcolm was in full command, with Shaddy in the background, and kept an eye to every boy while in the water.

In fact, I do not know how I could have got on in many of our emergencies but for Malcolm's loyalty and ever-ready efficiency. Those who have charge of boys' camps in the wilderness will understand — better, perhaps, than the general reader — what an amount of care and responsibility the welfare of a large party of youngsters entails. There is hardly an hour of the day when some new problem is not looming up for solution.

One comfort cheered me at Sourdnahunk: no bear got into Bugbee's trap there. I half suspected — though the boys did not — that Bugbee had not set it in so skillful a manner as he might have done. The trap was sprung several times, but did not appear to hold game well, though one porcupine was squeezed to death in it. Good old Buggy had become aware of the wild and perilous hullabaloo that followed the trapping of a bear; and of course there are various ways to set a trap.

I had assigned the care of the raft to Daddy Green, since he had had experience, he assured me, rafting logs on the lakes. Our raft from which the boys fished was, as will be recalled, a makeshift affair of dry spruce logs bound together by poles and birchen withes. If we had possessed an auger and had made ash pins, a much more substantial raft could have been constructed. Still this one appeared to answer quite well; and I had bidden Green look to the

withes every morning before the boys put off to fish. Sailing it, of course, when waves were running, subjected it to greater strain.

On our sixth morning, Arthur, Porter, Herbert, and two or three of the others took Daddy Green and Shaddy to help them pole the raft, and started to cross toward the north shore. They had espied a cow moose with two calves over there, and wanted to see how near they could get to them.

Malcolm, Lucas, Morris, and Roscoe were mending and patching their clothes at that time. Roscoe in particular was, I remember, greatly in need of repairs; he looked as if the bears had been clawing him. In fact all our garments were showing the very visible effects of five weeks' sojourn in the wilds. Some of us had quite given up the wearing of socks; and it was becoming more evident every day that we soon must be returning to civilization, or decency might compel us never to go back!

Gordon Ames, Charley Bowen, Brooks Linden-heim, and Montrose Whitten were helping Bug-bee and myself in conducting laundry operations on a grand scale alongshore. Many believe that camping out is all clear fun; but just the same there is a lot of work to be done.

In place of a clothesline I was very busy rigging long slim poles, laid in crotched stakes, set in the ground, when Gordon shouted that the boys on

the raft were having trouble; and indeed next moment we heard them hallooing fearfully! They had returned from the other side of the lake, and were now within two hundred yards of the shore. Porter said afterwards that they had run on a submerged rock and that Green and Shaddy were attempting to pole off when the raft suddenly broke apart and went to pieces, precipitating them all into the water among the floating logs.

The lake was not deep there, not over five or six feet, and the boys could swim, if given a fair chance. The logs, too, should have enabled them to float.

Nevertheless Herbert somehow failed to get hold of a log and went under water, but after a moment came up again. He was strangling and trying to call for help. The others were getting clear of the logs and swimming ashore, each for himself, Daddy Green splashing and puffing like a grampus. Porter, however, heard Herbert call out and turned back to help him, but not soon enough to prevent him from going down a second time. I think the wreck of the raft bothered them; Porter became much exhausted and could only cling to one of the logs.

We who were on shore went to the rescue as fast as we could, running out through the shallow water toward the wreck. Malcolm, who was ahead, started swimming as soon as he reached

water shoulder high and getting one arm over a floating log reached down an arm to seize hold of Herbert, who was now lying on the bottom, or near it. Lucas and Shaddy also reached Malcolm's side a few instants later and joined in the effort to lift Herbert to the surface. They got hold of one arm, but strange to say had great difficulty in pulling him up!

At the moment when the alarm was given, Bugbee and I were a little way back in the woods, beyond the shanty, in quest of more slim poles for our clothesline, but ran back to the shore at once. Neither of us was an expert swimmer and, as we saw that Malcolm and Shaddy were supporting one of the boys in the water, I thought that our best chance of helping was to push off to them a long dry log that lay on the shore. This we did as hastily as possible, through the shallow water.

It was Shaddy who had finally lifted Herbert to the surface. He and Malcolm were holding Herbert's head above water when we got out to them with the large log. It had been a slow rescue. I suppose it may have been eight or ten minutes before the now insensible boy could be brought ashore and efforts made to resuscitate him. He looked quite white and cold. Water was running from his mouth and nostrils.

We got to work quickly. Kneeling astride his body I began the slow regular movements of re-

suscitation. Bugbee, Arthur, and Lucas meantime were rubbing and chafing him all over. Bugbee also brought warm water from a kettle over the fire at the shanty and immersed his feet and hands in it.

But it seemed as if all our efforts would be useless. The boy remained cold, breathless. Twice Bugbee, Shaddy, and Malcolm paused from their exertions, stood back, and looked at me helplessly.

But I felt we must not, could not, would not give Herbert up, and worked steadily on. By and by — after an age it seemed to me — I felt a slight stir of the lad's body and detected the quiver of an eyelid.

'I do believe he's coming round!' whispered Malcolm, awestruck.

'Fetch some hot coffee, Bugbee,' I called out.

It was all I could now do to keep the other boys back. They crowded up with the wildest exclamations of joy and hope.

'Oh, he isn't dead, he isn't dead, after all!' they shouted; and as if in response to these outcries of his companions, Herbert opened his eyes, and I could feel his heart faintly beating. After a few pulsations, it became indistinct again and for a time we were afraid he was relapsing into unconsciousness. Spoonfuls of hot coffee were now administered, and presently he roused, attempted to speak, and ere long grew rational.

We had saved him. Few more joyful moments have come into my life. It had been a hard fight. We had, I think, worked over him for nearly an hour, a terrible hour, and twice were on the point of giving up the battle.

CHAPTER XIV

MOOSE BULLS IN CONFLICT

WE had intended leaving Sourdnahunk Lake next morning; but the accident to Herbert kept us there another day, since the lad continued feeble and much exhausted for twenty-four hours or more. His lungs had been badly affected and, as there was some danger that pneumonia might follow, I kept him lying up at the shanty, warm and asleep as much as possible.

Meantime Shaddy, with Malcolm, Arthur, Ernest, and three or four of the other boys, went alongshore to the outlet where Sourdnahunk Stream flows westward for six miles close past Ootop Mountain, and thereafter takes its rapid way down a valley for eight miles farther, to its confluence with the West Branch of the Penobscot.

Sourdnahunk Lake is, I conclude, fully seventeen hundred feet above sea level. Mindful of the hard march the lads had taken with packs from Chimney Pond to the Lake, I concluded to follow the stream down no farther than Ootop, the first day, camp there and complete the jaunt to the West Branch the succeeding forenoon.

Shaddy, Malcolm, and the others had gone to explore the route in advance, and also to fish in

the stream, for the food question was still as serious as ever with us. They returned during the afternoon fetching nearly fifty pounds of handsome trout and a hedgehog that one of the boys had shot. They had seen six deer, several fawns, also two young moose wading in the slack water of the outlet. The Sourdnahunk region abounded in game. We saw moose every day along the lake shores; and Louis declared he had seen a 'half moose' (caribou).

In short, the boys had a great deal to tell us; and among other things, they gave me an account of a prodigious noise they had heard in the woods on the opposite side of the stream — a continued crashing as of falling trees, which at first led me to conjecture that lumbermen were at work there, though this seemed hardly probable.

After an early breakfast next morning, the luggage was tied up in packs and distributed for transportation, as before; and at nine o'clock we set off on what was to be our last long hike. One favoring circumstance was that the diminished quantity of provisions rendered the packs much lighter than on our journey up from Katahdin — a lightness, however, that gave me not a little anxiety lest we might be reduced to starvation rations before arriving at Medway.

Louis was fractious, and grumbled so savagely at being given the large tent as his share that I finally imposed it on Daddy Green and Shaddy,

alternately, mile and mile each as nearly as they could guess at it.

In the course of an hour the southwest end of the lake was reached where the stream leaves it; and here I set Louis fishing, with orders to follow us with what he should have caught in an hour's time; and at a log dam on the stream, two miles or so below, I left Shaddy to fish in a like manner while Daddy Green toiled on with the tent. I greatly desired to catch all the fish possible before we should abandon good trout waters, former experience having shown me that the West Branch was less well stocked with fish.

Malcolm and Bugbee were leading the long train of pack-bearers, while I shepherded the rear, to prevent the younger boys and Daddy from lagging too far behind. Green, in fact, soon became so tired that I was obliged to relieve him of the big tent. It weighed fully sixty pounds, and even more when damp from dew or showers. To transport it on one's back over a rough trail was no easy task; and Daddy was apt to pant heavily when his strength was taxed.

The report of a gun at length caused us to hurry forward, as I knew that Malcolm would permit no shooting unless for fair cause; and upon overtaking those ahead we found them near another log dam on the stream, all much excited, trying to drive out a number of otters from beneath the old structure. These had been dis-

covered 'sliding' and fishing in the pool below the dam, but, on the arrival of the boys, they had taken refuge underneath it.

Not many of the party had seen an otter before, and were much impressed by the sleekness of their skins and their graceful movements in the water. Three had been seen and Malcolm believed there were others under the dam.

'If we could get them, wouldn't the skins sell and help pay some of our grub bills?' was his very practical remark.

'Well, no use to bother with them, then,' he agreed when I had informed him that the fur would be of little value at this season of the year.

'Come on, fellows. Pick up packs and hike. I want to get back to the place where we heard that queer noise yesterday. It sounded to me as if the Old Boy was to pay over there in the woods! I thought once that I heard groaning,' he added.

'Groaning?' I queried.

'Why, yes, it sounded a little like it, but I don't know that it was. It was only a little way below here,' Malcolm continued. 'I wish you'd go on ahead with me. Perhaps we might hear it again and discover what's going on.'

Malcolm was so keen and bright about everything that I felt sure he had heard something odd, and hastened forward with him ahead of the others.

'Twas right along here that we heard it,'

Malcolm said after we had gone perhaps half a mile. The stream was low at this point and purled softly among the stones of its bed. There were falls not far below. Ootop Mountain rose steeply over the treetops on the opposite bank.

There was no difficulty in crossing the stream on the bare stones of the channel. We entered the forest on the other side and had proceeded forward for a hundred yards, maybe, when a strange sort of bellow broke on the stillness, followed by sounds of a terrific struggle in the underbrush.

‘There, that’s what I heard!’ Malcolm exclaimed, catching at my arm. ‘Not bears, is it?’

We stood listening for some moments till the noise ceased as suddenly as it had begun. I had a pretty good notion as to the nature of the rumpus and again stole forward, Malcolm close behind me. The growth was quite thick thereabouts, mostly small spruce with a few alder clumps. We had advanced but a few steps farther when a dark body — two bodies, head to head — was discovered lying prostrate in the smashed underbrush. Malcolm drew back.

‘What’s that?’ he whispered. But I had espied antlers. Two moose bulls had been engaged in savage conflict, neither able to win an advantage. It would appear, too, that they had been fighting since the previous day, which was unusual, to say the least; and on approaching a

little nearer, it became evident that their wide-branching antlers had somehow become interlocked, and that they were unable to get free from each other.

The moose were huge, dark-brown, nearly black, ungainly animals, their antlers spreading to a width of nearly four feet. I suppose the pair must have weighed twenty-five hundred pounds, perhaps more. How long they had been in this painful condition we could only guess. Apparently they were badly exhausted and bade fair to perish of starvation unless they should somehow succeed in separating themselves.

While we stood at a little distance, watching, another terrible struggle began, either to get free or to continue the battle. Laboring heavily to their feet they shoved each other this way and that, grunting, bawling, tearing up the moss and dead foliage. Brush crackled; the forest resounded to the uproar. It was a frightful spectacle. We instinctively drew back. If they were unexpectedly to break loose, there was no saying what course their fury might take! Moose have been known to rush wildly upon mankind at sight.

The fracas may have continued for two or three minutes, then ceased as suddenly as it had begun; and again the exhausted combatants sank to the ground, snorting and panting loudly.

Malcolm stared at me in bewilderment.

‘What will happen if they can’t get apart?’ he cried. ‘Will they kill each other? Will they fight till they both die, locked together like that?’ It seemed quite probable that they might at last perish of exhaustion or starvation.

‘Do you think we ought to try to help them get free?’ was the lad’s next suggestion.

‘That would indeed be a merciful act,’ I agreed. ‘But I don’t know who would want to attempt it. One or both of them might rush at their rescuer the instant they broke loose,’ I objected. Malcolm looked puzzled and disturbed.

Just at that moment we heard the voices of the other boys who by this time had caught up with us, Bugbee with them, and had stopped on the farther side of the stream.

‘They must see these moose!’ cried Malcolm, and ran hastily off to summon them, while for some moments I stood wondering just what we ought to do in such a case. It was plain that the moose were in much distress and bade fair to die miserably. The makers of the game laws appear not to have considered such an occurrence. If in this instance I should put the moose out of their misery by shooting them, and a warden happened along, I might have difficulty in explaining the situation to his satisfaction.

I had purposely remained until after Malcolm brought the other boys across, for I was afraid they might venture up too close to the moose.

No one could be quite sure what the enraged creatures would do in case they tore loose.

Porter, Arthur, and Lucas were the first to arrive, quickly followed, however, by all the rest. It was amusing to hear their exclamations of astonishment and to listen to the various comments that were made as they gathered fearfully around, ready to bolt whenever the belligerent animals stirred. Bugbee, too, came over to see what was going on. But Daddy Green had lain down to rest after his exertions. Bugbee related that he had once found the skulls of two moose locked together by their antlers, his supposition being that they had been fighting in much the same manner as these two.

Neither Shaddy nor Louis had yet caught up with us, and I decided to camp for the night on the south bank of the stream, to let the boys fish. There were fine pools hereabouts where alluring schools of trout were seen. Over a hundred were taken out within an hour, and Bugbee began frying them fresh from the water. Shaddy appeared while we were thus refreshing ourselves, and he, too, bore a noble string of red-spots on his back; but the boys seemed unable to think or talk of anything save those hapless beasts. Bugbee had explained to them that the moose would very likely die, locked together there.

'Serves them right! They've no need to be so pugnacious!' Schermerhorn Adams declared. 'I don't pity 'em!'

But the most of the boys expressed compassion.

‘I think we ought to help them get apart,’ Lucas said. ‘It’s awful to have them going on day after day, a week or two, perhaps, dying of thirst and hunger!’

‘Yes, and have them turn on you, if you went near to help them!’ interposed Schermerhorn sarcastically.

‘That would be just because they knew no better,’ rejoined Lucas stoutly. ‘They are some like the Apaches out in Arizona where my father is stationed. Those Apaches would kill the whole of us, if they could, but Dad says that we must care for them just the same, that we have to round them up and get them on a reservation.’

The greater part of the boys agreed with Lucas. ‘Buggy, could we do anything to get these moose apart?’ Arthur called out to Bugbee. They had come to nickname him ‘Buggy’ without the slightest disrespect. In point of fact, they all loved Bugbee. Boys recognize a man when they see him, even quicker than their elders do. Bugbee’s wen was a very visible deformity, but, after that first sharp outbreak, not one of the party ever alluded to it, or appeared to notice it during the entire six weeks we were at Katahdin.

At first Bugbee did not reply to Arthur’s

question; but after he had finished frying trout, extinguished the fire and wiped out his pans, we saw him cross the stream and disappear in the direction of the now quiet moose.

‘Buggy’s gone to reconnoiter,’ Porter said. ‘He will tell us if it is best to try to do anything.’

Returning after a while, Bugbee reported in substance that, if we had a long line, it might be possible to steal up near enough to the moose to attach it to the antlers of one of them, and then by vigorous pulling might so rack the antlers that they would give way.

‘I dunno certain,’ he continued. ‘We might not be able to accomplish anything at all. Moose shed their antlers, you know, only once a year. They drop off, but not usually until December or January. They would come off hard at this season. But maybe, by violent jerks, one or both sets might be pulled from their heads. In that case both animals would go free.’

‘D’ye think they would take at us?’ Herbert questioned.

‘Can’t say,’ Bugbee replied, laughing. ‘But I rather guess they are too nigh tuckered out to catch us, if we scattered and ran away!’

Since a majority of the party was in favor of making an effort to free the moose, the Commissary-General assented, though in some doubt about its feasibility. As on a former occasion,

when Shaddy was rescued from the eagles' eyrie, at Chimney Pond, we made up a line nearly sixty feet long, by using the guy ropes from the large tent and tying them together.

While this was being accomplished, we heard the moose fighting and bellowing again. They were still there, head to head, however, sprawling and quiet, when at length we crossed the stream and drew near. In his cooking outfit, Bugbee possessed an iron pothook and this he took along, fastening it to one end of the line.

'I will do what I can,' he told us. 'I will try to hook this to the antlers of one of the moose, close down to his head, if you will keep the line straight and be ready to pull hard the moment I have done so,' he directed.

I bade the boys keep back out of harm's way, all but Malcolm, Lucas, Porter, Arthur, and Pinkham Stearns, whom I told off to pull with Shaddy and myself on the line. If this held — and it was of strong new rope — I imagined we should be able to pull something loose!

Stealing forward, we straightened the line and then Bugbee took the pothook in his hand and moved slowly and silently toward the animals where they lay apparently exhausted from their struggles. But they saw or heard Bugbee approaching. First one, then the other attempted to jump up, as if to run away, or else to rush at him. They whirled around, reared and fell over

each other, grunting and bawling again, but at length fell, tired out and panting heavily.

Taking advantage of these moments of extreme exhaustion, Bugbee again stole forward and by a quick lunge succeeded in attaching the pothook, then ran back, shouting, 'Pull! Pull!' — and we all pulled, surging on the line and hauling with might and main. Bugbee, too, grabbed hold with us. We fairly dragged the heavy creatures round sidewise!

'Pull! Pull awfully!' yelled Malcolm, and the seven of us gave our united strength to a supreme effort. We actually moved that great weight of flesh and bone for ten feet or more, when suddenly the antlers gave way and we all tumbled headlong, but as quickly regained our feet and ran through the woods back toward the stream, for the moose bulls were leaping up, one of them with no antlers at all, the other with both sets of antlers dangling from his head.

We had pulled the set off one moose's head, leaving it still attached to the other. Rather feebly both animals now galloped away, still snorting, the bareheaded one shaking his head uncomfortably. Apparently they had no desire to inquire into what had happened to them, or learn how it had been accomplished.

Perceiving that no attack was likely to follow, we paused to gaze after the disappearing animals; and something about it all so tickled

the boys that they stood and laughed uproariously.

Bugbee meanwhile was salvaging his pothook and line.

'I swow!' he muttered. 'That beats everything I ever saw in the way of moose-hunting!'

It was now drawing toward evening; and still Louis had not rejoined us.

But while we were about our preparations to camp for the night, Louis made his appearance, fetching eighteen small trout — about the amount two of our hungry boys would eat at one meal! Shaddy had caught five times as many in one hour.

How Louis had spent the day, he was not inclined to explain, merely saying, 'Trout no bite.'

I had already warned the boys not to tell him about the moose, and as a further precaution I segregated his carbine that night in the small tent, with the other firearms.

Along in the small hours of the morning, we heard moose bellowing pugnaciously again; but it is safe to say that they were not the ones we had so dramatically set free the previous afternoon. I imagine that those two had had enough of war for a time.

CHAPTER XV

ON THE WAY HOME

AFTER an hour spent in fishing with good success at the pools of Sourdnehunk Stream next morning, we resumed our way for six miles down the rapid watercourse to its confluence with the West Branch of the Penobscot.

This time I took care to have Louis carry the large tent, despite his protests.

'You did nothing all day yesterday,' I said to him. 'To-day, you work.'

The exigencies of the trail in the narrow valley of the stream compelled us to cross it three times at somewhat difficult points. We reached the West Branch, however, by half-past ten in the forenoon and to my great joy found all five of our canoes unmolested. But the dry weather had so shrunk the seams of two that we were occupied three hours calking them.

Later in the day, after luncheon, we went down the Branch to our old camp-ground at Abol; there we spent the night and fished the great pool where the two Abol brooks, cold and pure from the side of Katahdin, enter it, but with no great success. A New York party had been fishing there during the early part of the day, which probably accounted for the few rises we had.

A great deal had happened since we camped at the place six weeks previously. The boys especially had passed through many new experiences, and witnessed much that was wholly novel and exciting.

'Why, it seems years ago!' Malcolm exclaimed, as he stood looking about the scenes of our first visit there. 'When I look back, it appears to me I was just a green kid at that time!'

Porter, too, made a similar remark. 'I've lived a whole lifetime since then!' he declared.

It really had been a completely new and wonderfully interesting experience for all the boys.

'I feel as if I had learned twice as much as I knew before,' Pinkham Stearns confessed. 'Only think of the bears we've hunted and the fish we've caught!'

'And the moose we've seen!' Lucas chimed in.

'And the fights we fought at first!' shouted Charley Bowen.

'And the bean-holes we've dug!' cried Arthur Fairbanks, laughing.

'And the woes and worries we've given the Commissary-General!' Herbert added. 'I bet we've put gray hairs in his head': an idea which tickled them so much that they all suddenly rushed upon me to paw over my hair which, truth to say, had grown ridiculously long.

'Well, you would better look in my hair, too, while you are about it!' Malcolm suggested.

‘For I want you to understand that the President of this Katahdin Republic has had his worries, too! I wouldn’t wonder if I was getting bald!’

‘Oh, I’ll risk your old pate!’ cried Schermerhorn Adams. ‘And your heart is as hard as your head. I haven’t forgotten how you made me sit in the sun two hours behind the shanty at Sourd-nahunk Lake — just for slapping Herbert only once, when he needed it twice!’

‘Guess that’s so,’ assented Herbert genially. ‘I really was too personal in what I said to you that day.’

‘Nuff said, Herb!’ cried Schermerhorn. ‘Shake!’

One of the best features of the trip was the way it had bound the boys together after they were led to organize their ‘Republic’ and found themselves depending on their own resources.

From Abol the return trip to Medway began at sunrise, next morning. School, we knew, was now loudly calling the party home to Boston. The faces of many of them were not wholly joyous, however, as we broke camp, manned the canoes, and set off on our homeward voyage down the West Branch.

‘But we can come back next summer, can’t we?’ several voices found solace in saying. ‘You will come with us again, won’t you, sir?’

The Commissary-General was not quite able

to make that promise, but declared he would like to do so — which was by no means an untruth, for I had come to love every one of those boys.

The water in the West Branch was now low and we had four carries to make that day; but, toughened and trained by their former experiences, all the older boys bore a hand with good will at toting the canoes and dunnage. By noon we had reached Debsconeag and, after lunching at our former camping-ground on the point, paddled on down Pamadumcook Lake, passed through the North Twin Lake and made shift to camp on the river-bank.

We were scandalously near the end of our food supply; I had drawn it perilously fine; but the incomparable Bugbee contrived to 'rax' up enough, from the odds and ends of things, for the midday and evening meals, and even a breakfast of corn-meal mush, sugar, and coffee, next morning. And after making an early start from North Twin, two o'clock that afternoon found us safe and sound at Medway.

Accidents and narrow escapes we had had, yet nothing fatal or very serious had befallen us. Every boy was back looking none the worse, and most of them much the better for the trip. An immense load of responsibility rolled from my mental shoulders, and I thanked all the local divinities that haunt old Katahdin that no toll

of young lives had been taken of my inconsiderate venture. I wouldn't dare tempt them so far again! Most campers and tourists of experience will no doubt say that my undertaking was rash, perhaps reprehensible. My only defense is, that by good luck and diligence we 'got by'!

At Medway I paid and dismissed our four guides. Bugbee was the only one from whom I felt any real sorrow at parting, though Shadwell was a good-hearted young fellow and, as time passed, became an efficient guide.

There was again trouble in settling with Louis. He had been with us forty-three days, at three dollars per day; but he insisted that he had worked forty-eight days and demanded a hundred and forty-four dollars. The testimony of Bugbee, Shadwell, and Green at last induced him to take what was actually due him, and depart. But in revenge he went, a few days later, and lodged a complaint against me to the effect that I had compelled him to shoot four deer, a fawn, and a 'half moose,' for the subsistence of my party of boys!

Fortunately, perhaps, for our good name, I had already forestalled his malice by sending a statement to the game authorities of the State as to what Louis had shot contrary to my orders while in my employ.

As a rather laughable sequel to Louis's conduct, he approached the morning after we had

reached Medway, and requested me to give him a recommendation as guide. Now Louis could neither read nor write, and I, perhaps — in the interest of the public — took an unfair advantage of his illiteracy, by complying as follows:

This is to Certify that Louis Maccabeson has been with me for six weeks. He is a good shot, a good woodsman, and fairly expert in the management of a canoe. He is, however, a facile and ever-ready liar, disobedient of orders, untrustworthy, and likely to desert his party at a pinch, if he can get his pay.

I believed this strong enough to protect others who might be in the way of hiring a guide.

Louis grabbed this and stalked off, apparently triumphant and happy. I hope I properly served the public.

The little tavern at Medway was heavily taxed to entertain and provide for the many wants of our party. The boys were just as hungry as ever; and it was necessary, moreover, to begin patching and darning again. The repairs made at Sourdnahunk had not stood the wear and tear of the last three days on the carries. In fact the rough life of the woods had nearly 'done for' our garments which were falling into pieces every way. Much of the afternoon must needs be devoted to mending before we would dare embark on the stage next morning.

More linen thread and darning-needles were procured at the general store of the place, also

drilling cloth and a few yards of a dark woolen fabric, for patches fore and aft — particularly in the latter quarter! The boys went to it bravely and truly accomplished wonders in the way of closing the many disastrous breaches which gaped in their clothes.

The remarks the boys made as they sewed manfully with those darning-needles, enlivened by fast-recurrent yelps of anguish, so convulsed the womenfolks of the inn that all domestic labors ceased for an hour or two! Even the surrounding population collected to witness the spectacle.

Although one of the youngest of the party, little Giartsu — the Japanese lad — proved far and away the most skillful with his needle. He not only repaired his own clothes, but also little Jimmy Knox's, and toward the end of the séance, earned a quarter from Morris by patching a yawning crevasse in the latter's trousers.

In the interest of public decorum, I mounted guard at the door of the little hotel parlor, during the time the boys were plying needle and thread within, but was helpless to prevent the women of the place from coming to look in at the two windows. It is safe to affirm that we afforded the Medwayers more free amusement that day than the annals of that remote little settlement had any record of previously.

During the evening six of the lads succeeded

in getting a hair-cut at the one local barber shop. At eleven o'clock, however, the barber gave up the task; and twelve of us, including the Commissary-General, were obliged to take the stage next morning, quite as we had issued from the wilds. It is astonishing how much hair a healthy boy will grow in two months. Several of the party, Porter and Roscoe in particular, had hair in rolls on their shoulders.

We arrived at Mattawamkeag and from that point journeyed down to Bangor by rail, in time to board the steamer for Boston in the afternoon. The vessel was thronged with passengers, with every berth taken. Discovering that our appearance occasioned curiosity, we paraded the deck, Malcolm marching at the head of the procession, the Commissary-General closing the file, shouting at intervals and in chorus that we were long-haired delegates from the Mount Katahdin Republic, on our way to Washington to demand admission to the Union as a new State. Much applause greeted this announcement, though one old gentleman informed us gravely that Mount Katahdin was in Maine and that already Maine was a State.

'You would better not attempt anything like secession,' he counseled us. 'That's been tried and it won't work!' — which also elicited great applause.

Owing to lack of postal and telegraphic facili-

ties, I had been unable to bespeak accommodations for the party in advance; and we bade fair to make a night of it on deck. By good luck, however, three deck staterooms — engaged by sportsmen, but remaining uncalled for — were secured after the steamer sailed; and in these we made shift to pass a not wholly uncomfortable night at sea.

From the wharf, next morning, we again marched in a file — still attracting much amused attention — to the old Marston eating-house on Brattle Street. Actually there were tears in the eyes of several of the boys when we finally said good-bye at the door of the restaurant. Perhaps it wasn't all from having to go back to school. Herbert choked and couldn't speak, but clung to my hand until Malcolm — still President! — pulled him away.

'Don't behave like that,' he said; but his own eyes looked moist. Laggingly they walked away as I stood looking after them. At the corner of Brattle Street and Scollay Square they all turned and made an attempt to give me three cheers — clearly an afterthought of Malcolm. But there wasn't much hurrah to it, more sorrow than gladness. I knew just how they felt because I was feeling the same myself: I could have run after them!

It had been a fearful responsibility and cost me most of my spare cash, but I wouldn't have

missed it. There had been something in it I had never experienced before.

I mentioned this to my friend Edith — Herbert's mother — when, after putting on other clothes, I called on her that afternoon. She regarded me curiously for a moment, then remarked, 'You ought to have boys of your own. Sometime I hope you will.'

I never saw all those boys again. The great world swallowed them up; but many of them wrote to me at times; and some of them have continued to do so even now when years have passed.

Malcolm Knox afterward led a party of gold-seekers from Edmonton, Alberta, overland through the mountains to Alaska, made a fortune at Dawson City, built a new railroad, returned to the United States, discovered petroleum in Arkansas, and is now an oil magnate of the Southwest. In a letter, received a few months ago, he wrote among other things:

I learned to manage men from that first lesson managing boys on that trip with you up to Mount Katahdin. One of these days I want to visit you and tell you of that journey of mine through the northern Rockies, to Alaska. I hope I can persuade you to write an account of it. It was 'some' journey, I can assure you. There were fifty-eight of us in the party, one a little girl only nine, with her father. She was the mascot of the expedition. What care we took of her! — and do you know, sir, twelve years afterward I married that little girl? I

shall want to fetch her with me to see you. It was quite a romance.

Pinkham Stearns, who has long been a Government engineer, wrote last summer to me saying:

It was always one of the disappointments of my life that we boys could never manage to make another camping trip with you to Katahdin. Never shall I forget that night at Chimney Pond and the rocks that cannoned down there. Do you think that any one really rolled them down?

What a scamp that Louis was! Louis pretty nearly bore out old General Sherman's idea of a 'good Indian.' And that Jackman! He ought to have been dealt with. Malcolm always wanted to meet up with Jackman somewhere!

But Bugbee was an old saint. Do you remember that big wen of his and how Malcolm forbade any of us to notice or ever speak of it? We all loved 'Buggy.'

Arthur Fairbanks is at present the manufacturer of a really good type of automobile and has written more than once to inquire about the trout at Sourdnahunk Lake; he asks if there is still good fishing there.

'How those trout did bite and how good they tasted!' he says. 'I have always wanted to get back there and go out on another raft. But poor Herb! What a close call he did have that day the raft was wrecked!'

In Charley Bowen's letters there has been

much to say of Katahdin. That grand old mountain impressed him profoundly.

‘I often think I would like to take a party there myself,’ he writes. ‘I wonder if it would seem the same again? Perhaps not, we were all so young then. What ever became of old Daddy Green? I can see him now, standing by the camp-fire with his mouth half open, watching the boys carry on round the bean-hole, while you and Buggy dished out baked beans to us. I’ve camped and dug bean-holes since, but never any of them produced beans that tasted like those up there in the shadow of old Katahdin. I used always to come back a second time with my platter for more — and wanted to come three times!’

Last Christmas, Porter Canfield, Jr., now a municipal Judge in a Western city, wrote:

That trip we took to Katahdin is the one grand memory of my boyhood. I go on a vacation every year, and have traveled over most of the world since, but nothing has left memories like that. In 1909 I went to Africa to hunt lions, but for real excitement no lion ever equaled the bears we boys hunted at Katahdin. I suppose it was because we were so young and had such fresh, youthful minds. Those bears had the real thrill in them. I can smell bears yet! You were worried nearly to death for fear we would shoot each other — and with reason. Reloading guns at full cock with loose powder and balls isn’t exactly a safe procedure! But that was what Herb and I did half the time — we got so excited!

Lucas Galbraith was almost the only one of the party who failed to write. His father, Captain Galbraith, of the United States Army, was at that time guarding Apaches in Arizona; and I have heard that Lucas went immediately West to join him. Afterward he received a cadet's appointment for West Point and was graduated there, but resigned from the military service to become a civil engineer. In 1917 he volunteered for the Expeditionary Force to go overseas, where he served in the Great War, as Captain. Lucas never came back. He sleeps in a foreign grave.

Nor has little Giartsu Oteri forgotten me. After remaining four years more in America, he returned home to Japan and is now an eminent official of the Mikado's Government at Kobe. Last New Year's he sent me a beautiful gold-clasped volume from which I unfortunately cannot read a word, but I infer that it is a collection of maxims and doctrines from Shinto — the Japanese national religion.

Of it, in his very correct English, he wrote:

This little book holds that which is very dear to the hearts of my people. It is in accord with what it teaches that we seek to regulate our lives. To us in Japan, it is what your Bible is to the American people. To my mind both are very good books, one as much so as the other. This I came to believe while I was in your great and prosperous country. It is my hope and the hope of all

the best and most cultivated people of Japan, that our two countries will always remain in harmony and at peace.

Rather fine — no?

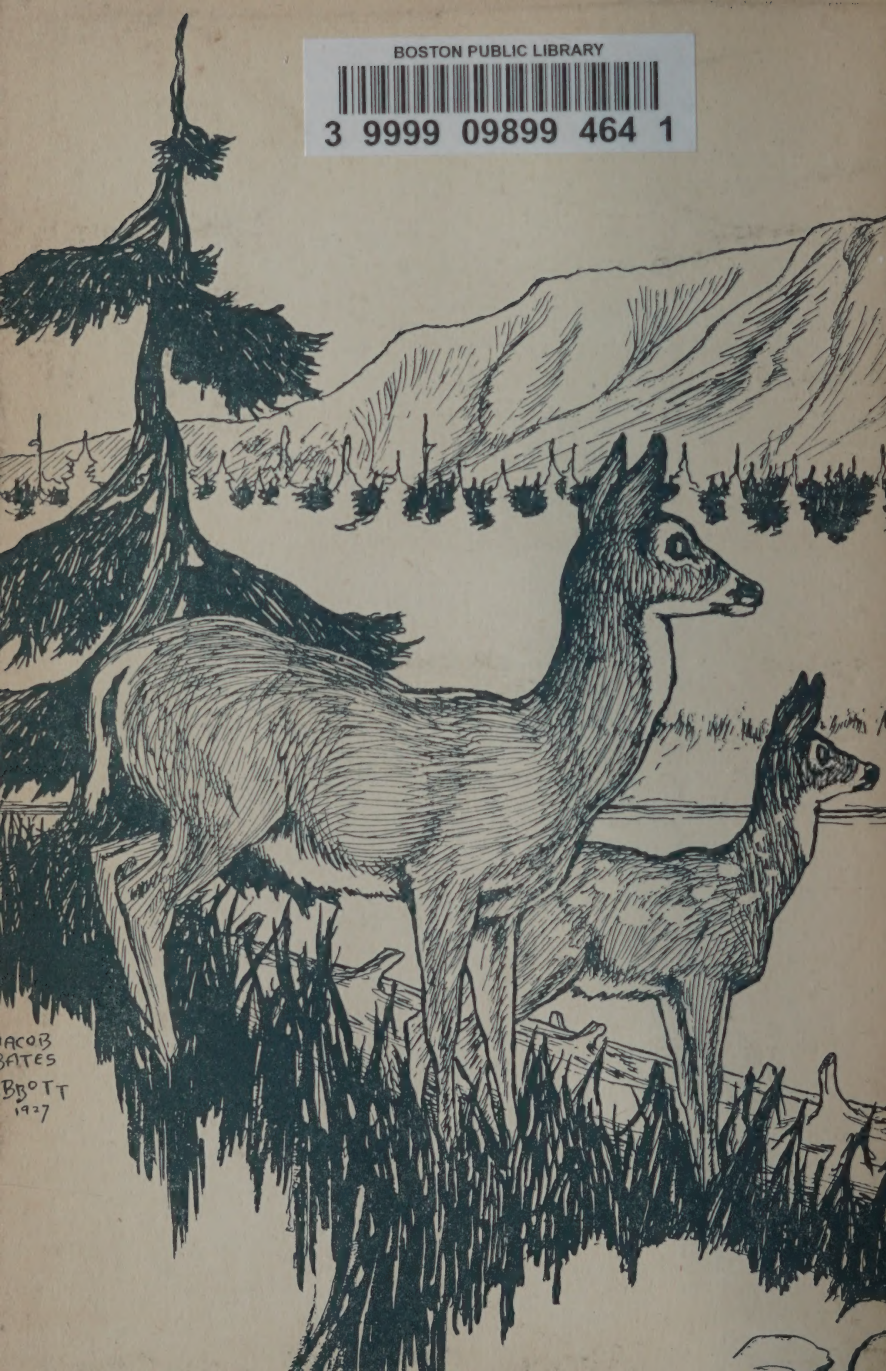
It has been one of the greatest satisfactions of life to know that all those boys have turned out so well.

THE END

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